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ABSTRACT

This report contains the principal materials prepared for the first year of the "Forum on Public/Private Social Concern," which focused on issues of disadvantaged young men in urban areas. The forum is an information exchange for funders and policymakers in government, foundation, and business sectors. Included is a report summarizing the accomplishments and activities of the first year of the forum, which synthesizes meeting presentations and group discussions and offers recommendations. Those recommendations touch on the following: (1) program design and implementation; (2) grantmaking; (3) evaluation of grants and programs; and (4) public policy approaches. Also included are three background papers. The first paper, "Structural Impediments to Success," examines the economic, social, and demographic dynamics and factors that inhibit many young men from making a successful transition into adulthood. The second paper, "Long-Term Investments in Youth," reviews how disadvantaged urban youth are better served by long-term, multi-service programs than by categorical efforts. The third paper, "A Call for Culturally Sensitive Programs To Serve Disadvantaged Youth," considers the need for culturally sensitive programs. Included are 42 references. (JB)

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DISADVANTAGED YOUNG MEN IN URBAN AREAS

A Summary of the First Year of the Forum on Public/Private Social Concern

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A Summary of the First Year of the Forum on Public/Private Social Concern

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Summer 1991

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains the principal materials prepared for the first year of the ***Forum on Public/Private Social Concern***, a new effort of The Union Institute Office for Social Responsibility's Center for Public Policy, undertaken with support from the Ford Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The *Forum*, which began operations in March 1990, is an information exchange for funders and policy makers in the government, foundation, and business sectors; its goal is to improve the quality and effectiveness of resources and programs that address domestic social issues.

Included are the following:

- a brief overview of the *Forum*;
- a report summarizing the accomplishments and activities of the first year of the *Forum*, which focussed on issues of **disadvantaged young men in urban areas**, and highlighting recommendations for grantmaking, program and policy development in this field;
- three background papers prepared for the meetings of the *Forum* that examine different aspects of the topic; and
- an annotated bibliography of key sources used in *Forum* research.

The Summary Report synthesizes meeting presentations and group discussions. It includes the recommendations distilled from *Forum* meetings for policy makers and funders. These include both generic recommendations for program operators, grantmakers and policy makers, as well as issue-specific suggestions. Several of the primary recommendations include:

- *program design and implementation*: youth programs should be community-based, provide multiple services or be linked to services offered in the community, be flexible, and culturally sensitive. Implications for structural change should be explicit. Programs should provide a safe environment, foster one-to-one adult-child relationships, and open windows of opportunity for the young people.
- *grantmaking*: support should be long-term to ensure new programs get underway and reach some stability before core funding diminishes; it should

favor developmental models over deficit approaches to the needs of disadvantaged young men.

- *evaluation of grants and program*: all programs need careful and appropriate evaluation, performed by professionals who are familiar with the community and the type of program being assessed. Better methods for evaluating comprehensive programs must be developed; all evaluations should reflect structural considerations.

- *public policy approaches*: policy should create a positive youth development agenda that is interdisciplinary, holistic, and addresses the structural causes of disadvantage.

The three background papers outline research and analysis on critical aspects of the topic, and are designed to promote discussion and consideration of alternative approaches to these issues. The first paper in the series, ***Structural Impediments to Success: A Look at Disadvantaged Young Men in Urban Areas***, examines the economic, social, and demographic dynamics and factors that inhibit many young men from making a successful transition into adulthood.

The second paper, ***Long-Term Investments in Youth: The Need for Comprehensive Programs for Disadvantaged Young Men in Urban Areas***, reviews how disadvantaged urban youth are better served by long-term, multi-service programs than by categorical efforts.

The third paper, ***A Call for Culturally Sensitive Programs to Serve Disadvantaged Youth***, considers the need for culturally sensitive programs to serve the growing number of disadvantaged minority youth in America's inner cities.

During its second year, the *Forum on Public/Private Social Concern*, with its interest in structural change and the relationship between funders and policy makers as a backdrop, will examine the **connections between public will and public policy**. Without a fuller understanding of the forces shaping and determining public will, public policy is often incompletely informed. The *Forum* process will include discussion of what constitutes public will; how it is formed, developed, and changed; how the public views its role in relation to private philanthropy and public policy; and the avenues open to funders and policy makers to jointly strive to enhance public will and the policy process.

FIRST YEAR SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The ***Forum on Public/Private Social Concern*** is an information exchange for funders and policy makers in the government, business, and foundation sectors. The *Forum* brings together sector leaders in an informal setting to consider the connections between philanthropy and public policy, discuss common objectives, and share strategies with the goal of improving the effectiveness of resources allocated to ameliorate domestic social problems.

This is a summary report of the first year of the *Forum*. **It outlines the goals of the *Forum*; reviews *Forum* outcomes and accomplishments; analyzes the implications for program design, funding strategies, and public policy that emerged from *Forum* meetings; and identifies potential follow-up activities.**

PURPOSE

The *Forum on Public/Private Social Concern* is designed to provide a mechanism for funders and policy makers to examine the implications of emerging issues both for future funding and policy decisions, and for the review of work currently underway. **The *Forum* works to promote a common understanding of the overall context of social problems, key intervention points, effective program approaches, and innovative program models, so that public and private funders and policy makers can learn together to employ their resources more effectively.**

The *Forum* is guided by an Advisory Board (see attached list) of leaders in the funding community and public policy experts. They oversee its design and operation, review ideas and materials, assist in the development of topics, and lend their expertise and perspective to the *Forum*.

The Project Panel (see attached list), a group of experts on the annual topic, aids the staff in the development of agendas and materials, recruits participants and presenters, and identifies illustrative programs.

The *Forum*, which began operations in the spring of 1990, has financial support from the Ford Foundation and W.K. Kellogg Foundation for three years. Topics and meeting participants are chosen annually. Participants include federal executive and legislative branch officials; state and local government (executive and legislative) officials, agency directors, and senior staff; private and corporate foundation directors, program officers, and board members; representatives of the business community; and experts from policy development, analysis and implementation organizations.

To ensure that the network of funders and policy makers is as extensive as possible, only those leaders who represent a significant constituency or serve as the hub of a network within their sector are invited to participate. Service providers appear as presenters and as resource people on designated subjects.

Focusing on an annual topic, the *Forum on Public/Private Concern*:

1. **hosts a series of principal meetings each year for selected funders and policy makers.** Each meeting is moderated by an expert facilitator, includes participants from each sector, and is highlighted by presentations from the policy community and directors of outstanding programs. The principal format is a well-structured meeting with formal presentations and informal discussions.

Meetings focus on analysis of a specific domestic social issue, its context, an exchange of information on successful program strategies, intervention points, and innovative program prototypes that are, or promise to be, effective. Each meeting includes significant time for participants to question presenters and to talk with each other, creating a shared base of knowledge and promoting further exchange and interaction.

2. **produces background papers circulated in advance of each principal meeting that place the topic in its broad context, outline significant strategies, locate them on a continuum of intervention points, and include brief descriptions of illustrative programs.** In addition, meeting participants are asked to bring information about programs that they have supported, or are considering supporting or developing, to share with the group.

3. **hosts periodic meetings and briefings of narrower dimension based on the expressed interests of *Forum* participants.**

4. **serves as a secretariat for groups of funders and policy makers who wish to continue meeting, analyzing, and working together.** The *Forum* staff also serves as a resource to participants in locating and making available materials on the annual topic.

FIRST YEAR OUTCOMES

The *Forum* is designed to improve resource-allocation decisions by broadening the shared base of information used by policy-makers and funders and by opening the channels of communication between them. At the same time, the *Forum* encourages participants to take a fresh look at issues in order to examine social problems and potential solutions in a structural, root-cause context. Traditional responses to social problems have often been piecemeal and crisis-oriented; the *Forum* promotes a comprehensive and proactive response to the issues.

The topic chosen for the first year of the *Forum* was disadvantaged young men in urban areas. It was chosen after establishing the topic selection criterion as an "emerging" issue in which there is public agreement that a severe social problem exists but little agreement on ways to formulate and initiate solutions. In addition, it is an area in which piecemeal approaches are being tried with little effort to examine and address the issue in its totality or develop comprehensive solutions.

After the Advisory Board determined the topic, *Forum* staff met individually with its members and Project Panel members and condensed their extensive suggestions into a *Forum* participant invitation list. Forty-four individuals from the different sectors were invited to participate, thirty-two accepted.

THE FIRST MEETING

The first meeting of the *Forum* provided a profile of disadvantaged young men in urban areas and an overview of the issues affecting them. To set the context for the meeting, a background paper entitled *Structural Impediments to Success: A Look at Disadvantaged Young Men in Urban Areas*, was produced and sent to participants in advance of the meeting.

Presenters were chosen to provide a demographic overview, an ethnographic overview, and a programmatic overview. They included:

- Bill O'Hare, Director of Policy at the Population Reference Bureau;

- Philippe Bourgois, ethnographer and Resident Scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation;

- A panel of program designers and operators: Jack Calhoun, Executive Director of the National Crime Prevention Council; Ed Pitt, former Director of Adolescent Male Programs at the National Urban League; and Luis Garden Acosta, Director of El Puente, a Brooklyn neighborhood-centered, multi-service program for young people and their families.

The paper and the presenters provided a consistent picture of disadvantaged young men in urban areas. Many of these young men face a series of structural obstacles that preclude their success and place them at a disadvantage when competing for education, jobs, and wealth. Contrary to negative media depictions of this population, they are highly motivated and aspire to substantive employment opportunities in the legal economy. However, for the unskilled and undereducated worker living in the inner-city, few decently compensated jobs are available.

Recently, the nation's economy has shifted from a manufacturing to a service-based system. Many manufacturing firms, including those that traditionally employed large numbers of low skilled workers, have shut down or relocated from urban centers. The majority of job growth, especially for low-skilled workers, has been in service and retail sector positions, which are low paying, lack benefits, and have a high turnover rate.

In addition, the nation is growing increasingly dependent on high technology, which has escalated the education requirements for meaningful employment. Although the high school attainment rate has improved for all young people in recent years, the pace of academic improvement among disadvantaged urban youth has not kept up with the changing requirements of the labor force.

With a lack of substantial job options, an increasing number of inner-city young men are turning to the illegal economy. Many of them hope to earn a large sum of money very quickly so they can establish themselves in the mainstream economy. Unfortunately, the risk of drug abuse, incarceration, and death far offsets the chance of later success in the vocational system. Despite the risks, many young men continue to seek the American dream through the only means they have available.

The paucity of job opportunities, compounded by the day-to-day realities of the inner-city (among them poverty, physical isolation, racial discrimination, inadequate schools, and the frustration of not being able to adequately provide for oneself or one's family), produces high rates of school dropout, crime, violence, drug abuse, and hopelessness within these communities. To move beyond short-range efforts to long-range investments in the development of the most disadvantaged youth, it is necessary to realize that problems affecting them are largely structural in nature.

THE SECOND MEETING

At the request of participants, **the second meeting focused on the characteristics of successful youth development programs.** A report entitled *Long-Term Investments in Youth: The Need for Comprehensive Programs for Disadvantaged Young Men in Urban Areas* was prepared and circulated, and leaders of three types of highly successful youth development initiatives discussed each program's design and administration. Those presenting included:

- Sonya Bu, Director of the New York City Youth Action Program;
- Ed Tetelman, Director of the New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP), accompanied by Gail Reynolds, Director of the New Brunswick Program, an SBYSP site; and
- Lynn Curtis, President of the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation.

To highlight the underlying similarities in the needs and behaviors of all youth, whether black, white, or Latino, Mercer Sullivan, an ethnographer at the New School for Social Research, discussed crime patterns and employment opportunities among youths in three New York City ethnic neighborhoods. Sullivan concluded that differences in the economic and social structure of a community were the primary determinants of criminal activity patterns among inner-city youths. Ron Ferguson, Associate Professor of Public Policy, Harvard University, discussed how cultural messages that young people receive often generate their future expectations. He contended that community-based programs that broaden the options available to disadvantaged young men are vital.

Problems facing disadvantaged urban youth are structural, interrelated, and demand long-term, comprehensive solutions. Due to economic changes, institutions within many inner-city communities have broken down. Community capacity must be rebuilt and links made to the outside labor market. Community-based youth development programs are a good example of what needs to be done to assist disadvantaged young men and their families.

Following is a set of principles and characteristics common to successful programs serving at-risk youth:

- **Structure of program**: community-based, multi-service, flexible, employs trained personnel, oriented to youth development, employs and builds upon the resources available within the community

- **Operative Values**: culturally affirming and sensitive, develops caring relationships, and provides individual attention

- **Goals of program**: provides a protective environment, links youth to real opportunities, provides skills training, garners parental support, and encourages peer support.

Other program characteristics for which research is less conclusive or conflicting and need further attention include:

- **Program focus and design characteristics:** prevention versus remediation, programs for specific racial and ethnic groups of youth, allocation of resources for the most at-risk, evaluation of comprehensive programs, and replication of successful programs

- **Program definition questions**: definition of the term at-risk, determination of the qualities of a successful transition into adulthood, and use of volunteers compared to paid staff

- **Other questions**: whether adult mentors should be of the same sex and race as the youth.

THE THIRD MEETING

Based on the strong request of participants, the third meeting had a double focus. **The first issue examined was whether programs need to be designed for specific racial and ethnic groups of youth**. To respond to that issue, *A Call for Culturally Sensitive Programs to Serve Disadvantaged Youth* was prepared and circulated. In addition, Karen Pittman, Director, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, Academy for Educational Development, examined this question and presented her vision for a national youth development agenda.

Pittman stressed the need for a new youth philosophy. Traditionally, we have categorized certain groups as deficient, needing to be fixed. Programs have been reactive in an effort to curb these negative tendencies. A new agenda should command a positive view of youth. It should treat all young people equally, encouraging and assisting all youth toward a healthy development. Programs should proactively build upon youth's attributes, rather than labeling and focusing on the few who manifest negative behavior.

With the assumption that problems facing disadvantaged young men are systemic, **the latter half of the meeting explored ways that participants could work together to bring about structural change.** Bob Stumberg, Associate Director for Policy, Center for Policy Alternatives, outlined his model for stimulating change on the local and state levels. Ed O'Neil, Executive Director, Pew Health Education Commission, Duke University, presented his methods for leveraging change within large institutions.

Opinions vary greatly about the role of cultural diversity in youth program design. Many practitioners believe that programs should be culturally sensitive and reflect the racial and ethnic background of the community they serve in staff representation, literature, and philosophy. Developing cultural knowledge and pride among minority youth can be a source of strength and a way to re-engage them as productive citizens.

Pittman contended that cultural sensitivity must be an aspect of a successful youth development program, but should not be its driving premise. **A tendency to focus too much on issues of culture sends a stigmatizing message that the targeted group is culturally deficient. This approach may also divert resources, and lead many to believe that the problems facing this population are cultural rather than systemic.**

Turning to the second focus, Stumberg stressed that **there are three steps necessary to foster social change: educate the public about the issue, build constituency around the issue, and design policy.** Policy is comprised of the creative ideas that drive the new agenda and hold the constituency together.

O'Neil's model suggests that change can be promoted when the following equation prevails: $A < B + C + D$, in which A is the benefit of the *status quo*, B is the pain of maintaining the status quo, C is the ability to envision things differently, and D is small steps taken to pursue the vision. He argued that it is impossible to change systems without altering the status quo; social problems are complex, and to change one factor is to alter the relationship of all other elements. Therefore, before changes are initiated, it must be determined whether the will to create change is stronger than the desire to maintain the status quo.

OTHER FORUM ACTIVITIES

Information presented at *Forum* meetings was supplemented between meetings by additional mailings. These included **an annotated bibliography of *Forum* sources and a list of networks concerned with youth policy**, both of which were compiled by *Forum* staff. In addition, **participants were informed of news articles, materials from conferences on related issues, and current academic papers which were available on request**. Because there is so much activity in this issue area and no central source for disseminating it, *Forum* participants reported that they benefited greatly from and appreciated the information flow.

PROCESS OUTCOMES

Participants reported profiting from their *Forum* involvement in a number of ways. These areas include:

- **professional and personal networking:** developing networks on a "real level" with leaders in their own and other sectors whom they would not ordinarily get to know, allowing collaboration;

- **idea and information sharing**: testing out their own theories and ideas with knowledgeable colleagues in an "off the record" setting, sharing information and contacts with others outside the *Forum*;

- **new approaches to issues of concern**: having the time and facility to look at issues in a new context that deepened their level of understanding and exposed them to new possibilities; examining increased collaboration among foundation colleagues; and exploring program models that have the potential to be replicated on a national level.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The *Forum* seeks to create new approaches to problems, to develop innovative examinations of issues, and to lay the groundwork for the development of improved resource allocation strategies. A number of themes emerged from the *Forum* meetings that have implications for future actions in program design, grantmaking, and public policy for disadvantaged young men in urban areas. They are enumerated below:

PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Overall Characteristics:

- Programs should be community-based. They should strive to build upon the resources existing within the community. They should help to build institutions within the community, promote leadership among community members, and empower people to help themselves.

- Because social problems are interrelated, programs should provide a comprehensive array of services or easily accessible referral mechanism, based upon the needs of the community. Whenever possible, they should promote positive youth development, yet be able to respond to crisis situations.

- Programs should be flexible in order to respond to the changing needs and constituency of a community.

- Programs should be culturally sensitive, reflecting the racial and cultural make-up of the community in their staff representation, literature, and philosophy. They should strive to foster cultural pride and tolerance among the people they serve.

- Programs must be evaluated. Evaluators must understand the type of program and the community. It can be counterproductive to send in outside evaluators who are not knowledgeable about the program or the population being served, or who do not understand and share a program's goals, especially in terms of community development and structural change.

General Components:

- Programs should rely primarily on trained staff, not volunteers.

- They should provide individual attention and a safe, nurturing environment.

- Programs should offer recreation activities, education and job skills training, social skills and counseling, and reward structures supportive of continuing positive personal development.

- All programs should build youth's confidence, create hope, develop or make them aware of broader opportunities, and make connections between them, their communities, and the larger world of work.

Specific Characteristics:

- Programs must reach the most disadvantaged young people. Those in greatest need tend not to receive assistance. This may require more intensive efforts to help understaffed and underfunded programs apply for, and obtain, needed grant support.

- Programs should recognize that youth are individuals first, but they are also part of a family and a community. They must attempt to build, rather than destroy, young people's connection with their families and community.

- Programs should value youth as resources (human capital) rather than as something to be fixed. Programs must enable them to take on responsibility and exercise leadership to understand that they are needed and competent. They should involve youth in the planning and governance of the program, including adults relinquishing some authority to young people.

GRANTMAKING

Approach And Scope Of New Programs

- Whether a new program is designed to be comprehensive or categorical, the needs and existing services within the community must be assessed. Efforts should be made to coordinate the new program with other community services and public and private resources in mutually supportive ways.

- Grants need to be made for long enough periods to nurture lasting change and show real results in a community. Grantmaking should focus on root cause solutions, rather than crisis or short term response to social problems.

- Grantmakers should attempt to build upon and foster leadership and capacity within the community. They should build upon community institutions and resources already in place. This may necessitate providing technical assistance and administrative costs to less secure and sophisticated groups.

- Grant recipients in other communities should be enabled to assist in the creation of the new program, development, and training of its staff. This support could take the form of technical assistance, advice, peer support, and so on.

- Programs should be accountable to the community as well as the funding agency.

Collaborative Grantmaking

- Funders ought to involve other community members in local grantmaking and decision-making processes. They need to discover ways to pool resources and avoid duplication of work already in progress.
- Grantmakers should determine whether collaboration with other funders is feasible, including public/private partnerships, and whether these would strengthen the program.
- Funders need to consider alternative funding strategies, such as contributions that can be used to leverage other money (i.e. challenge and matching grants).

Evaluation and Replication

- Evaluation capacity should be included in program grant.
- Careful attention ought to be paid to goals of evaluation, the type of evaluation, and the selection of evaluators most appropriate for the program. It should be ensured that the evaluation team is compatible with the program and its staff and that the evaluation is sensitive to alternative community-based program values and design.
- Evaluations should examine both the long and short-term goals of the organization to allow the program to exist and operate long enough for the evaluation to measure true results. A measure of the first or second year of a program is a review, not an evaluation.
- Funders need to develop new ways to evaluate comprehensive, multi-service programs that allow for an examination of the overall program, rather than discrete parts.
- Replication of successful program models, both new and ongoing, should be a goal.

PUBLIC POLICY

Goal Setting

- Develop a national will to make issues of youth development, such as the need for comprehensive long term solutions, a priority.

- Develop leadership around youth issues on the local, state, and federal levels. These leaders can then develop and popularize the need for comprehensive, long-term solutions.

- Create a positive youth development agenda that reflects the specific expectations of young people, including what constitutes a successful transition to them.

- Make it a national priority to establish the supports and institutions necessary to guarantee a successful transition to adulthood for all young people. This system should take a positive, developmental approach instead of a deficit, compensatory approach to serving youth.

- Develop an interdisciplinary mindset for approaching youth policy. Social problems are interconnected, solutions should be also.

Policy Initiatives

- Policy should focus on the structural causes of disadvantage, rather than its manifestation.

- Look at alternative systems and determine how they can enable change within traditional systems, in order to foster structural change.

- Create a current directory of all federal programs for youth, including education, human services, criminal justice and work programs.

- Examine the realities of racism today, and to what extent racial and ethnic differences affect inclusion/exclusion in this culture.

- Explore the discrepancy between what public institutions are funding and what community-based organizations are finding successful.

- Develop a system of reciprocity for disadvantaged people. They would be given the supports to become self-sufficient and in turn would work for a service provider in some capacity. (This is the concept of the GI Bill in reverse).

POTENTIAL FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Throughout the meetings, ideas were outlined about how the group would like to continue to work together beyond the first year. Following is a list of some suggestions under consideration and others in the formative stage:

- Meet with members of the Kellogg Foundation Leadership Division to recommend focus for grantmaking in the area of African-American young men.
- Replicate the *Forum* on the local, state, and/or regional levels.
- Develop strategies for working with the National Council of State Legislatures to develop closer relationships between funders and state legislative officials.
- Examine the possibility of collaborative ventures among foundation participants.

CONCLUSION

Goals for the first round of *Forum* meetings included creating an atmosphere in which participants would be comfortable with themselves and each other; thinking about issues in a new and more systemic way; and using those new ideas and approaches to enrich their grantmaking, policy development, or program implementation efforts. Through the caliber of speakers recruited, the level of discussion at meetings, and the commitment of the *Forum* participants, the *Forum on Public/Private Social Concern* has succeeded in promoting thinking and networking which will make an important contribution to changing the nature of the intricate and interlocking levels of policy and program affecting disadvantaged young men in urban areas.

STRUCTURAL IMPEDIMENTS TO SUCCESS

Are we losing a generation of young men? Currently, 7.3 million (23%) 16-24 year olds are not in school, not attached to or seeking entry into the primary labor market, and are not enrolled in the military.[1] Although research indicates that all disadvantaged[2] youth in urban areas are facing impediments to their success, this paper will focus on the realities of **disadvantaged young men** in their mid-teens to early twenties.

A growing proportion of this population lacks the basic skills necessary to compete in today's changing labor market. Those men who are employed, yet lack a high school or college degree, are finding it increasingly difficult to earn enough to support themselves (and their families) above the poverty level. Disadvantaged young men are at the greatest risk of dropping out of school, becoming fathers prematurely, becoming the victims of and arrested for violent criminal activity, and facing chronic unemployment. This paper will explore how recent economic, demographic and social changes have created the conditions that are presently constricting the opportunities and future expectations of today's urban young men.

While public attention is currently focused on inner-city black young men, all disadvantaged youth are facing structural barriers that are inhibiting their success. The risk of viewing these issues as a primarily black or minority concern is to exclude many who need assistance, blame the victim, and fail to realize that solutions must be essentially structural in nature. **To move beyond short-range efforts and toward effective long-range investment in the development of the most disadvantaged youth, it is necessary to recognize that problems affecting youth are directly linked to poverty and structural shifts in U.S. society.**

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Since WWII, major economic transformations have drastically altered the American labor market. Specifically, the earnings structure, the mix of occupations, and the educational requirements necessary for employment have all changed dramatically. As we shall see, young men with limited skills, living in our central cities, have suffered notably from these changes.

For the purpose of understanding these trends, many economists divide post-WWII America into two distinct phases: before and after 1973. The 26 year period after the war was a time of economic prosperity in which productivity, inflation-adjusted wages (hereafter "real wages"), and standards of living increased and poverty rates declined. The period after 1973 is often referred to as a quiet depression in which the growth of productivity came to a halt, real wages declined, and unemployment and poverty rates began to escalate.

After 1973, all workers experienced some decline in real earnings, but young workers with limited education and low seniority were the hardest hit. **In 1986 the real median income of males (20-24) was one-fourth (25.8%) less than their peers of 1973.**[3] For high school dropouts and black males, the situation was worse. Dropouts earned 42% less in 1986 than their contemporaries of 1973. **Between 1959 and 1973, the real median income of young black males rose 68%, from 1973 to 1984 it decreased by 44%.**[4] (Comparative Census Bureau statistics are not available during this time period for Hispanics.)

In addition, fewer young men are participating in the labor market. In 1973, 7.3% of 20-24 year old males reported no earnings; by 1984 the rate had climbed to 12%.[5] For inner-city black youth, the situation may be reaching crisis proportions. Nationally, the unemployment rate of young black males is 2 1/2 to 3 times greater than that of young white men.[6] According to William Julius Wilson, in the inner-city where there is a high concentration of impoverished, unskilled black youth, only a minority of non-institutionalized black youth are employed.[7] His research confirms that as these young men are excluded from participation in the labor market, their chance of future involvement is seriously undermined.

What is happening? The middle seems to have dropped out of the U.S. labor market as the economy has shifted from a manufacturing to a service-based system. Industry has shut down or moved from urban areas to the South, or more recently overseas, where resources and labor are cheaper. For the young and those without post-secondary education, low-wage positions in the retail trade and service sectors have replaced the high-wage jobs formerly provided by the manufacturing sector. **Since 1974, there has been a 25% drop in the proportion of young men employed in manufacturing industries and a 20% increase in the proportion employed in the service sector.** In addition, there has been growing dependence on high technology, which has escalated the education requirements for the higher paying jobs.

According to Gordon Berlin and Andrew Sum, changes in the mix of occupations brought on by structural shifts in the economy have created more low-wage than high-wage positions. Between 1979 and 1985, 8.0 million new jobs were generated while 1.7 million manufacturing sector positions were lost.[8] Roughly one-half of the new jobs created were low-wage and part-time in the retail trade and service sectors.[9] **According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 90% of the 18 million new jobs created in the next ten years will be in the service sector.[10]**

With the decline in industry jobs, young, unskilled workers have suffered the most, as the first fired and the last hired. In addition, this group of workers has traditionally depended upon union organizing within the manufacturing sector to raise their wages 20% - 30% higher than non-unionized laborers. Declines in industry jobs have resulted in a drop in unionization which has disproportionately affected the young worker.

Service sector positions that have replaced industry jobs are low paying, often crowded with young people, part-time, provide no benefits and do not allow for advancement. In addition, the majority of this job growth has occurred outside of metropolitan areas, in the suburbs and outlying areas.[11] It is well documented that disadvantaged and minority youth have great difficulty obtaining jobs beyond their home environments.

There is growing concern that the labor market is closing its doors to those with the least education and skills. Although a large number of service sector positions do not require advanced training and education, education will certainly be the key to higher wages, job security and occupational mobility. At the very minimum, these positions will require good communication and problem solving skills, and competency in reading and math.

To make matters worse, the military, which has been an avenue for disadvantaged youth and dropouts to gain an education and develop skills, has recently slashed the number of new recruits it will admit and upgraded entrance requirements. This will have serious repercussions for inner-city youth who more than ever need a route out of the constraints of their environment. According to James R. Wetzel, the civilian economy must prepare itself to take up the slack: "The loss of such a broad avenue of training, discipline in work-life, and on-the-job experience means a much larger burden on the civilian economy to provide such opportunities."[12]

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Demographic trends are an often neglected but generally accurate prediction of the future. The total number of youth is declining. Yet, these population reductions are not occurring evenly across racial lines. Minority youth are a growing proportion of the total youth population and the mix of the central city. Unfortunately, minority youth are more likely than white youth to be hampered by the effects of poverty: poor housing and health care, a lack of quality schools and services. Thus, they are less prepared to meet the challenges of a changing labor market.

The baby boom generation, born between 1945-1964, has been replaced by the baby bust generation, 1965-1984, with an anticipated reduction of 7.7 million young people (15 -24) between 1980 and 1995. [13] Although the absolute numbers of youth are declining, the minority youth population is falling at a much slower rate than that of white youth. **The Census Bureau has estimated that the proportion of black youth will rise from 13.7% of the total youth population in 1980 to 15.3% in 1995.**[14]

Because the number of Asians, Pacific Islanders and Native Americans are so small, they are usually considered together. They increased 5% in the early eighties and are projected to comprise 3.9% of the youth population by 1996.[15] Hispanics are the fastest growing group of young people; their population is expected to double between 1980 and 2000. **By the year 2030, approximately one in every five youths in the U.S. will be Hispanic.**[16]

Because the Hispanic population is growing so rapidly and statistics on them are relatively new and limited (before 1980 the Census did not distinguish between white and non-Hispanic white), it is important to delineate a few factors that exist behind blanket statistics of this population. First, the Hispanic population is a group of individuals bound together by a Spanish origin and language that represent many different countries and cultures. The term Hispanic includes those from Central and South America, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Cuba. The differences among these subgroups in terms of poverty, educational attainment, family structure, etc. tend to be greater than differences among Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites.[17]

Second is the issue of immigration. According to the 1980 Census, roughly one-third of all Hispanics living in the U.S. were foreign-born.[18] There are sharp differences between native-born and foreign-born youth. According to the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Youth and America's Future (hereafter "Grant Commission"), foreign-born youth often arrive in the U.S. from less developed nations, those in which the education and health care systems lag behind the U.S. Such differences among Hispanics must be taken into account when discussing the needs and obstacles of today's young people.

Demographic changes are rapidly altering the landscape of our workforce, our schools, and our neighborhoods. **Where the American labor force had been primarily composed of white males, minorities, white women and immigrants will constitute almost 90% of its net growth during the rest of this century.**[19] Similarly, urban schools have historically educated the majority of white children, but minority children now comprise 30% of our school age population.[20] In fact, "Between 1968 and 1986 the number of white school children fell by 18%, the number of black children increased 5% and the number of Hispanic children increased by 100%."[21] **Today, 22 of the 25 largest central city school systems are predominately people of color.**[22]

Wilson found that despite declining urban population rates, the number of inner-city youth, primarily minority youth, has risen dramatically. Based upon 1980 Census Bureau statistics, such youth are much more likely to live in metropolitan and central city areas than the general population. Furthermore, minority youth are over-represented among those youth living in the central city and under-represented among those living in the suburbs. Fifty-six percent (56%) of black youth live in the inner-city, while only 23% reside in the suburbs.[23] Conversely, 43% of white youth live in the suburbs and 23% in the central city.[24] Ninety percent (90%) of Hispanic youth reside in metropolitan areas.[25]

The geographical distribution of youth also varies by race. Alaska, Hawaii, Delaware, Georgia, and South Carolina have the highest percentage of youth. The smallest proportion of youth reside in Florida, Idaho and Utah. Concentrations of white youth tend to parallel that of the overall youth population. A disproportionate number of black youths live in the South; Asians and Pacific Islanders live primarily in the West; and Native Americans and Hispanics are concentrated in the Southwest and West.

URBAN POVERTY

Many forces are at work inhibiting the success of the disadvantaged urban male. The most crippling condition is their poverty, which is rising dramatically. As job opportunities have diminished in urban areas for the non-college educated worker and qualifications for substantive employment have risen, the proportion of residents living in poverty has skyrocketed.

Nowhere are poverty figures more astounding than in the inner-city. Wilson's analysis of Census Bureau statistics reveals that **between 1970 and 1980, the poverty population in the nation's 50 largest cities rose by 12%, despite a 5% reduction in the overall population of these cities.**[26] The poverty population of the nation's five largest cities (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Detroit), where almost 50% of the total poverty population resides, rose 22%; at the same time, there was a 9% reduction in the total population of these areas.[27]

Impoverished youth are at high risk of inadequate health care and nutrition, poor housing, lack of access to preschool programs, falling behind in school and dropping out, early pregnancy, becoming involved in the criminal justice system and other associated problems. Such conditions create a cycle of deprivation which originates with limited employment opportunities, low wages, too-early pregnancies, and low marriage rates among today's young adults that, if not curtailed, will continue for generations.

FAMILY FORMATION

A rising poverty rate has had its effect on family structure of the young and the increasing number of children growing up in poverty. The poverty rate for young families has doubled since 1973, reaching 30% in 1985.[28] Within this same time frame, the poverty rate among young black families has grown from 43% to 62%.[29]

Between 1974 and 1985, marriage rates declined 46% overall 62% for blacks.[30] Bleak economic prospects of young men may have reduced their motivation to marry and their eligibility as marriage partners.[31] **In the early seventies, 60% of young men without a college degree, ages 20-24, could earn enough through the manufacturing sector to support a family of three above the poverty line; by 1984 only 42% could do so.**[32] **For black and Hispanic men, the figures are worse.** During that same period, the percentage of black young men who could support a small family declined by more than half, from 55% to 23%, and for Hispanics the drop was from 61% to 35%.[33]

According to Wilson, lack of employment, incarceration, and premature deaths have shrunk the pool of "marriageable" black men in the inner-city. A study by Robert Lerman reveals that young fathers of all races who do not live with their children are more likely than those living with their children and childless men to have a history of poor academic performances and joblessness.[34] It can be inferred that women, whether or not they choose to have children, frequently forego marriage when their prospective mates cannot contribute to the family's financial well-being.

The number of single female heads-of-households has increased and a rising proportion of youth are poor. In 1960, 28% of women (ages 20-24) were not married; by 1988 this percent rose to 61%.[35] **Currently, 3 of 10 adolescents (ages 6 to 17) live in single-parent families.**[36] It is becoming increasingly necessary for a family to have two wage-earners to keep itself above the poverty line. Real wages are declining, and women still do not receive equal access and pay for their work. Thus, a family headed by a single woman is at a great risk of being poor, and potentially chronically poor.

According to Berlin and Sum, given current economic conditions, the likelihood that a child will be poor is directly linked to family structure. Their research indicates that the majority of children living in a female-headed household will spend some of their life in poverty, while only a minority of those youth growing up in a stable two-parent family will experience economic deprivation. According to Ellwood, **two-thirds of the children who grew up entirely in single-parent households spend the majority of their childhood in poverty, relative to only 2% of those who come of age in two-parent households.**[37] Overall, one of five youth is poor.[38]

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

It has been noted that future labor demands will require more highly skilled workers, that those who lack basic skills will most likely be left behind, and that women, minorities and immigrants will comprise the majority of new entrants into the workforce, at a time when proportionately more youth are growing up in poverty. What effect is this having on our educational system and how are young men faring?

Since the end of World War II, there have been significant gains in the high school attainment rates of young men, regardless of racial and ethnic background. Nationally, dropout rates have declined. In some urban areas, however, the dropout rate of young men is as high as 50%. Although general college enrollment rates are up, a large number of youth still do not attend postsecondary institutions. Recently, there has been a significant decline in the number of black and Hispanic high school graduates enrolling in college. And large achievement gaps exist between affluent and poor youth, as well as white and minority young men. This evidence seems to suggest that our system of education is not working well for all of our young people, and may be openly hostile toward some of them.

In 1987, 86% of all young men (ages 25-29) had graduated from high school, 86.5% of whites, 82.5% of blacks and 70% of Hispanics.[39] This is a vast improvement from the 66% of young men that completed high school in 1966 and the 38% in 1940.[40]

The proportion of high school graduates enrolled in college rose between the latter half of the 1950's and the beginning of the 1970's. By 1976, roughly the equivalent number of black and white high school graduates were enrolled in college, 33% and 33.5% respectively.[41] However, **since 1976, black enrollments have declined by more than one-fourth (26.1%) and white enrollments have increased by more than one-third (34.4%).[42]**

High school dropout statistics are confusing because there is no uniform standard. According to Census Bureau figures, the dropout rate has declined from 18% in 1973 to 15% in 1983.[43] This is largely due to improvements among young black men whose dropout rate decreased from 32% in 1973 to about 20% in 1983.[44] Hispanic students have the highest dropout rate. In 1988, nearly 36% of Hispanic youth (ages 16-24) had not graduated from high school. This is three times the rate for white youth.[45]

Many factors contribute to place numerous youth at risk of school failure and dropping out. Those growing up in large metropolitan areas are twice as likely to drop out of school than those from smaller cities.[46] Research concerning the relationship of racial status and the risk of dropout is contradictory. According to Wetzel, "nonpoor black youths appear to dropout at a rate that is only marginally higher than that of white youths, and among all young people from poor families, the proportion of blacks who fail to graduate from high school is actually lower than that of whites."[47] Other researchers argue that racism among faculty, institutions and in the practices of the society-at-large combine to make the risk of dropout greater for all minorities.

Research convincingly shows that poverty is one of the leading causes of school failure and high school dropout. Almost 50% of poor youth (ages 19-23) rank in the bottom fifth of the standardized test score distribution.[48] **Disadvantaged youth are three times more likely to leave school prematurely than middle and upper class youth.[49]**

In conjunction with poverty, an array of forces permeate American school systems and the lives of many youth, combining to create an environment that is inimicable to student development and success. These forces include: a lack of bilingual teachers and academic programs; a lack of environmental and emotional supports at home; too few significant adult relationships and a paucity of positive role models; low parental educational attainment; low teacher and school expectations; culturally insensitive teachers; unqualified teachers; a lack of supplies and inadequate facilities; disproportionately high suspension rates among certain groups of youth; students who are behind in grade level or older than classmates; high student-teacher ratios; tracking; gangs and school violence; early marriage, pregnancy and parenthood; employment; and a lack of connection between school and work that enables young people to see the value of academic attainment.

The growing concern that our schools, as they currently exist, can no longer meet the needs of our youth, is exacerbated by recent and anticipated economic and demographic changes. In the past it was sufficient for a small proportion of youth to become highly educated to fill the relatively few positions that demanded postsecondary training. Those who could not, or chose not to, pursue an education could find jobs to support themselves and their families above the poverty line. However, this is no longer an option for today's and future generations of young people. As a result, schools are going to have to reassess who they are educating and why, and students are going to have to understand that educational attainment will determine their opportunities for work and self-sufficiency.

DRUGS AND VIOLENCE

Philippe Bourgois states that the day-to-day experience of the inner-city resident, unemployment, racial discrimination and the frustration of not being able to provide for one's family above the poverty margin, produces high rates of crime, violence and drug abuse within these communities.[50] As structural barriers to success, rising unemployment, and poverty have intensified in recent years, it is surprising to many scholars that only a minority of inner-city youth are involved in gangs and the alternative drug economy. Nonetheless, the fear and destruction that these youth unleash within their communities is cause for great alarm and any attempt to address this situation must realize its political, economic and demographic origin.

When one thinks of the urban disadvantaged young man who is not tied to the labor force and has dropped out of school, the misconception is that he is idle and lazy, committing random acts of crime and violence, both to support and amuse himself. The work of Terry Williams and Philippe Bourgois, among others, convincingly shows that this myth is unjustified.

The majority of those involved in gangs and in the alternative economy are legally employed, or were at one time. They are not naive; they understand that the positions open to them are the least desirable jobs in the U.S. society, that they offer no future of economic security, personal fulfillment or self-worth. In reaction to this indignity, many turn to the avenues of success that are available to them. **These young men view their involvement in the lucrative alternative economy as temporary, to**

earn enough to one day establish themselves in the mainstream economy. As Bourgois states,

> "They are struggling determinedly - just as ruthlessly as the railroad and oil robber barons of the last century and the investment banker 'yuppies' of today - to earn money, demand dignity, and lead meaningful lives. Tragically, it is that very process of struggle against - yet within - the system that exacerbates the trauma of their community and destroys hundreds of thousands of lives on the individual level."[51]

The majority of crime and violence committed by inner-city young men is inflicted upon residents of their own community. According to Wetzel, **the young are more likely to be the victims, perpetrators and those arrested for criminal activity than any other segment of the population.**[52] Hispanics and blacks are more likely to be the victims of crime than are whites.

Homicide rates have actually declined in recent years, but the figures are still staggering among young black men, especially in the inner-city. Jewelle Taylor Gibbs reports that in 1984 the homicide rate was 61.5 per 100,000, down from 102.5 per 100,000 in 1970, yet still 33% higher than 25 years earlier.[53] Homicide rates are highest for young black men. Wetzel notes that in 1987, of the 4,500 youth murdered, more than 50% were black youth.[54] **Currently, a young black male has a 1 in 21 chance of being murdered before he reaches the age of 25.**[55]

Nationally, the number of people using drugs has declined among all ages, ethnic and racial groups. According to Wetzel, drug use among high school seniors dropped one-third from 1979 to 1988.[56]

Drug use, especially in the inner-city, is a response to the structural constraints of poverty and minority status in America today. Ann Brunswick argues that, for many young males, drugs afford the only avenue for economic independence and self-sufficiency.[57]

INCARCERATION

Studies consistently show that, regardless of race, young males, with a history of poverty, low levels of education, and a lack of steady employment opportunities are at the highest risk of incarceration. Blacks are proportionately more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system than Hispanics or whites. There is growing concern over the basis of this phenomenon and the repercussions it is having and will have on the lives of these young men and their communities.

Developmental psychologists and sociologists tend to agree that adolescence is a period of profound risk taking and testing of social and parental limits. **Sixty-six percent of all arrested for property crimes and fifty percent of all of those arrested for violent crimes in 1987 were under 25 years of age.**[58] During this same year, "Black youth accounted for 15% of the population under age 18, but represented 45%, 54%, 68%, and 39% of the arrests for murder/nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, respectively, among this population."[59] **One out of every four black males in their early twenties will spend some time in prison, jail, or on probation.**[60]

Research is divergent and limited in accounting for these stark racial differences. Some argue that racial discrimination may be at the heart of this phenomenon. Research conducted by Huizinga and Elliot suggests that minorities are more likely to be charged with more serious offenses, which usually carry a higher rate of incarceration, than whites involved in comparable levels of delinquent behavior.[61] Hawkins and Jones believe that racism is evident by the fact that more blacks are confined than would be expected on the basis of arrests alone.[62]

There is growing concern that rather than creating viable alternatives and structural changes to assist disadvantaged youth, the criminal justice system is being used as a method of "controlling" displaced and deviant young people. Traditionally, the responsibility of socializing adolescents has been left to families and the community: church, school and social services. In areas of poverty, these institutions appear to have broken down or are no longer capable of assisting their young men. **"Hence institutions of social control are often seen as 'last resort' methods of socialization for the youth of the dominant group but as primary agencies of socialization for young persons from subordinate groups."**[63]

Wilson contends that the high rate of incarceration is one factor contributing to the rising number of female-headed households, out-of wedlock births and consequently, the increasing number of children growing up in poverty.

Hawkins and Jones assert that arrest and imprisonment of adolescents is stigmatizing and reduces their chances for future employment. Adolescence is a period when youth should be developing skills and experience necessary for their future in the labor market. When a young man is excluded from this process, his future opportunities are severely affected. Correctional facilities should prepare youth for entry in the labor market once their sentence has expired. Rather, these institutions actually "socialize" youth for joblessness, as evidenced by the high recidivism rates in the criminal justice system.[64]

There is little debate that poverty and joblessness affect rates of incarceration. The stresses manifest by the inability to find gainful employment, prolonged poverty and confronting systematic barriers of racial discrimination may actually create such alienation from and hostility toward the dominant culture that it leads to criminal activity.

Clearly, a majority of the young men who face the constraints of poverty and minority status in this culture do not become involved in criminal activity, but it is important to recognize that they seem to be the most at risk of being arrested and eventually incarcerated.

LACK OF SUPPORTS

The primary responsibility for youth's social and personal development rests with the family. **Changes in family structure, labor force participation, and the poverty rate have made it increasingly difficult for families to provide their youth with the supervision, activities and supports necessary for a successful transition into adulthood.** There is an increasing number of female-headed households with children. Among the majority of two-parent families, both partners participate in the labor force. Currently, **7 out of 10 school-age children (ages 6 to 17) have mothers who work or are looking for work outside of the home.** This is an increase from 1970 when only 4 out of 10 children had mothers who worked.[65] Thus, more and more youth are coming home to empty houses and, in the case of the inner-city, to unsafe conditions. It is well documented that latch-key kids are at a much higher risk of developing problem behaviors and falling behind in school.[66]

There is a strong need, especially among poor youth, for well-coordinated, accessible and permanently funded youth development programs to assist families in caring for their youth. Many of these programs already exist, yet many lack the resources and coordination with other projects necessary to meet the multiplicity of needs of today's at-risk youth. Children's Defense Fund research demonstrates how many poor and minority parents have little job flexibility, long working hours, little formal education and are unable to afford the cost of many necessary services.[67]

CONCLUSION

Clearly, a growing proportion of our youth and families need assistance if they are to overcome the forces of poverty, joblessness, and racism that place them at a risk of not realizing their potential as self-sufficient and productive citizens. Today's disadvantaged young men in urban areas desperately need supervision during non-school and summer hours while their parents are at work: consistent adult relationships, supplemental education, health care and counseling, recreational activities, safe and clean facilities, skills development, improvements in self-esteem and a host of other services. Efforts designed to work with these young men must understand the reality of life in urban areas in the 1990's, that a complexity of interlocking and often contradictory forces shape their choices and future expectations. At present, their options are too limited. It is going to take a sustained and concerted effort on the part of all sectors of society to enable these young men to realize their full potential.

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LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS IN YOUTH

American society has created a myth of what it means to be successful: that success determines individual worth; that the individual is solely responsible for achieving success; that success is measured in terms of accumulated wealth and power; and that through hard work and ingenuity, anyone can become successful.

Disadvantaged young men in urban areas understand that driving expensive cars, wearing fine clothes, and sporting gold jewelry signify success. They strive to be successful and valued in this culture through whatever means possible.

The truth, however, is that **disadvantaged youth are denied the tools that make success attainable in the mainstream economy**. They need assistance in the form of housing, quality education and remedial tutoring, family counseling, sex education, adult relationships, medical care, recreation, safety, job training, and reasonable employment opportunities, to compete on equal terms for success in this society.

In the past, programs established to assist disadvantaged urban youth have been categorical and crisis-oriented. A program may have provided a young person with a condom or drug prevention classes, but did not offer him skills and employment opportunities as a reason for delaying parenthood or staying drug free. These programs did not invest in a youth as a whole person, but rather as someone manifesting a singular problem or pathology to be "fixed" or "cured" in a short period of time.

In contrast, new programs taking a comprehensive approach to disadvantaged young men have met with some success. These programs attempt to address root causes by taking a broad-based approach. However, these programs generally operate under highly individualized circumstances. They typically are run by charismatic leaders and committed staff with limitless vision, tenacity, sacrifice, and love. Because of their size and often unique nature, these programs have neither the experience nor, in many cases, the inclination to establish themselves in a more business-like and institutional manner, assuring evaluation and replication.

Comprehensive programs, if they are to be *truly comprehensive*, must address several issues that shape the lives of youth. These issues are not new; they involve the debate over individual action v. environmental constraints as the root of economic failure and fixative v. empowerment approaches to program development, adolescence and the themes of racism, class distinctions, poverty, and media messages. In addition, successful comprehensive programs must be replicated on a much broader scale to reach a greater number of urban youth; yet, the nature of these programs makes them difficult to reproduce.

Information is beginning to emerge about what programs work. However, our understanding of these programs is incomplete. This paper attempts to define the issues that will influence development of comprehensive programs and examines the qualities that have made them a promising alternative for the future.

BIOLOGY V. ENVIRONMENT

Individualism is at the heart of this nation's economic construct. The American myth holds that whether one makes it or not in this society is ultimately based on his/her motivation and tenacity.

On the other hand, **research indicates that poor and minority youth face a series of structural obstacles that often preclude their success and which certainly place them at a disadvantage when competing for education, jobs, and wealth.**

This is an age-old debate, but it sends a fundamental message to disadvantaged youth: who is to blame for the disparities that exist between them and more affluent youth? Are some youth falling behind and dropping out of school, becoming parents prematurely, becoming involved in deviant behavior, or attracted to the alternative economy because they are bad individuals of weak constitution? Or are there structural constraints at work, beyond their individual control, that limit their opportunities and place them at risk of not succeeding in the mainstream? Although this is a simplistic rendition of a complex set of issues, the way one answers this question sends a strong message to youth about whether they deserve supports and if so, whose responsibility it is to assist them.[1]

One solution to this dilemma comes from Mercer Sullivan's ethnographic research in three communities in New York City. He argues that individual actions and choices, whether to become involved in crime or whether to aspire to a prestigious business school, are tempered by one's social environment.[2] Individual actions and environmental constraints must be examined together when attempting to understand why some youth succeed and others fail.

ASSISTANCE V. EMPOWERMENT

Successful comprehensive programs do not view youth in isolation. They understand that young people are individuals first, part of a family second and lastly, members of a social community. Many of these programs provide services (remedial education, employment training, family counseling, health care, recreation, and opportunities for work) on the assumption that structural barriers to success exist in many poor urban communities, and that youth and their families need assistance in negotiating around them. At the same time, they encourage, facilitate, and often times demand involvement by young people in the design and governance of the programs and in their own continuing development.

Youth Action Program (YAP), founded in 1978 in New York City, is one of the most impressive youth empowerment programs. "The basic premise of YAP is that youth can be a strong force for good in their communities. They have a clear perception of what is wrong in the world and vivid ideas for constructive change; they lack only the confidence and skills needed to carry them out."[3] YAP provides youth services, job training and education for predominantly black and Hispanic youth (ages 10-24) of East Harlem.

Over the last 12 years, more than 5,000 young people have helped to organize and implement community improvement projects through YAP. YAP programs include: a construction company made up of young people that renovates city-owned buildings in the community for low income and homeless families; student leadership projects in three high schools; creation of a recreation center and study center in a church basement; formation of a park from a run down lot; and under development, a local child-care center.

By **involving youth in every level of program governance, from staffing and budget decisions to program and policy initiatives,** YAP hopes to instill in the youth of East Harlem a sense of community, and the skills and confidence necessary to become productive members of society.

ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence is a period of preparation for and transition toward adulthood. During this growth phase, biological and cognitive maturity occurs, preparing youth to take on adult roles of reproduction, work, and citizenship. In conjunction with this physical preparation, each society provides pathways, based upon its goals for adulthood, to facilitate youth's socialization.[4] The effectiveness of these structures determines whether the youth's transition is successful.

Before the turn of the century, adolescents were considered valuable members of society. They were given varied and meaningful opportunities for work and compensation under the guidance and protection of adult members of the community. "Adolescence was not a mixture of the childish and adult, it was a stage with a logic and definition of its own."[5]

Adolescence, in contemporary America, is an undervalued and trivialized period of development. As labor has become more abundant relative to opportunities for work, and jobs require more skill, adolescents have few vocational opportunities available to them. "The only meaningful role given to adolescents is as a student, and the only route toward successful adulthood is extended years of schooling."[6] The time between childhood and adulthood is so prolonged that many do not take on adult roles until their mid-twenties. Ironically, a young woman's menarche is, on average, at 12 1/2 years of age, and the average age a young man reaches puberty is 14. "This represents the greatest disparity between biological and social maturation in human history."[7]

Youth, especially those who are non-college bound, need routes to adulthood beyond schooling. The number of minority youth enrolling in college has declined significantly in recent years. According to Census statistics in 1986, 66% of white high school graduates did not go on to college. In the same year, 71% of black and Hispanic high school graduates did not enroll in college.[8] In 1988, 12% of white youth (age 16-24), 15% of black youth and 36% of Hispanic youth had not graduated from high school and were not enrolled in school.[9] With the recent decline in manufacturing jobs that traditionally provided regular employment to non-college bound youth, this problem is being exacerbated. Therefore, **this culture offers no viable pathway to adulthood for a majority of its young.**

According to Laurence Steinberg, adolescence has become a "social and economic holding period."[10] **Youth are not given an active role in society, although they are physically capable and emotionally ready to begin taking on more adult roles.**

There is growing concern over the materialistic tendencies of today's young people. Being a consumer is one of the few adult roles available to this population. More research is needed in this area, but it appears that advertisers have capitalized on youth's boredom and desire to grow up. Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent each year in advertising targeted at youth.

Many researchers are concerned that today's youth have less contact with adults, are more segregated by age, and have more autonomy than previous generations. Economic changes have made it necessary for both parents to enter the labor force. Divorce rates, rising numbers of woman having children out of wedlock, and few alternatives available for before- and after-school care have made it increasingly difficult for families and communities to provide the supervision to young people that was once available. As a result, youth are spending more time with their peers than previous generations. With limited roles available and increasing autonomy, many youth run the risk of becoming involved in deviant behaviors. As Steinberg states, "**... adolescents today may find it easier to purchase illicit drugs than to obtain legitimate employment.**"[11]

A growing number of fully capable youth are forced to wallow for an inordinately long period of time in low-paying, low-prestige positions until they reach adulthood. This sends a message to youth that they have no real value in society and that they probably are not going "to make it." Such a message of limited opportunity and diminished social worth places these young people in search of other activities to fill their needs and time.[12]

The National Crime Prevention Council has just completed a 2 1/2 year pilot project, **Youth as Resources (YAR)**, in three cities in Indiana to demonstrate that young people are a great resource for rebuilding their communities. Their philosophy is "If youth know that their community needs them, they will realize that they can be partners in solving some of society's most vexing problems and perceive that their responsible action will improve both the community's and their own situation."[13]

The goal of the project was to create a new perspective for communities and adults to view youth. Beginning in 1986, 150 projects were created involving 3000 young people. No one was excluded from participation: incarcerated youth and dropouts, as well as honor roll students and church youth groups, were active in YAR.

In each community, boards comprised of local young people and adults were established and given grant-making authority. Teams of youth and adults would develop and present their community improvement plan to the Board for approval.

YAR has proven to be exceedingly successful. Communities benefitted from new playgrounds, picnic areas, aviaries, facilities for the homeless, and drug awareness programs for elementary schools, to name a few of the promoted programs. In addition, they learned the value of their youngest members. Currently, many of these same youth sit on boards of community organizations and many of the projects developed by young people have found benefactors to sustain them.

Young people learned that they are needed in their communities and that they possess many worthwhile talents. Their participation improved their self-esteem, their visions, and their options for the future.

DISCRIMINATION BY RACE

Racism and discrimination continue to have a profound effect on the way youth perceive themselves and their opportunities for the future. Research confirms that as early as three years old, black children are aware of their subordinate position in this society.[14] Racism pervades the public school systems, the labor market, and the media.

It is well documented that teacher and parent expectations have a direct relationship to student performance. **Many minority and poor youth who lack certain preparations for school and have different cultural and language backgrounds from their teachers, and are at great risk of being placed into low-ability groupings before they reach kindergarten.**[15] Thirty-five percent of Hispanic students are in vocational education tracks and 40% are in general education classes.[16] Minority youth are underrepresented in gifted and talented programs and overrepresented in educable mentally retarded groupings.[17] Minority youth need strong academic preparation and those who choose vocational programs must be assured state-of-the-art training.[18] Many youth remain in these low-ability tracks throughout secondary school.

Stark differences in the achievement levels of poor and minority children becomes evident by about the third or fourth grade. They are then tracked into further remedial or special education programs. By the sixth or seventh grade the gulf between disadvantaged youth and other students can be as great as four grade levels. They become victims of self-fulfilling prophecies.

Based on this information, Jawanza Kunjufu conducted a study involving 20 young black men who had been in the same school for five years. He compared their national percentile ranking on the Iowa Reading Test at the beginning of their third grade year and at the end of the seventh grade. Youth who had scored at the 98th, 97th, 92nd, and 91st percentiles in the third grade had dropped to the 35th, 54th, 24th, and 68th percentiles, respectively, by the seventh grade.[19] Additional research is necessary to fully understand what is happening. Nonetheless, the study does suggest that, **as young men enter adolescence, something occurs that can not be accounted for on the basis of academic ability.**

John Ogbu believes, based on his ethnographic study of a community in northern California, that black youth reach a point in their education when they quit trying to compete for success in school. This is an unconscious adaptation to the limited opportunity to benefit from their education. He argues that blacks respond to "limited post school opportunity partly by reducing efforts in school tasks to the level of rewards they expected as future adults of American society."[20] Members of the community he studied continue to value education (as a means to get a good job and wages, not for its own sake) as much as those who are being well served by it. They just wish it would begin to pay off for them as it does for other members of society.

For those who continue on in school, the disparities among minority youth are later reflected in standardized tests that provide access to higher education and lead to better job opportunities. In this way, discrimination on the basis of race that begins in early childhood, affects the opportunities and aspirations of disadvantaged youth.

DISCRIMINATION BY CLASS

It is difficult to separate race and class when accounting for continuing inequities in American culture because disproportionate numbers of minority families are poor. However, William Julius Wilson and more recently, Benjamin DeMott, believe that class issues may be as much to blame for continuing inequities as race.[21] Failure to recognize this perpetuates group divisions and hatreds, and consequently, the status quo.

Research conducted by Franklin Frazier suggests that the conception of race and its effect on future aspirations and values varies by class. **Poor and middle-class black youth were more likely than affluent black youth to have experienced direct race discrimination.** Poor black youth reported feeling that white youth had a better chance of gaining employment. Middle-class black youth felt somewhat more optimistic about their future, but thought that their opportunities for employment were best when appealing to black employers or pursuing traditionally black career paths. Upper-class black youth were less likely to report that they came into direct contact with racist attitudes. Although aware of racism in the society-at-large, they felt confident about their future and that "competence and efficiency would be recognized whatever the color of the person possessing these qualities." [22]

Poor and predominantly minority communities tend to have inadequate school systems. Teachers, administrators, and facilities frequently are not of the quality found in more affluent districts.[23] Teachers and administrators who serve at-risk youth and who are not yet trained to be culturally sensitive can have a negative impact on those they intend to help. DeMott argues that public school teachers' understanding of the "ideal" student and the intelligent student is one who personifies middle- and upper-class behavior, aspirations, manners, dress and speech. "Schools everywhere take middle and upper class understandings of experience as its standard."[24] Experiences of poor and working class families tend to value education as it relates to real life and work. **It is no wonder that impoverished youth have the highest dropout rates; as schools are currently designed, there is very little connection between school and work.**

In 1988 the New Jersey Department of Human Services developed a program, **New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP)**, to link the education and human services systems for young people (age 13-19) at risk of dropping out of school, becoming pregnant, abusing drugs, not being treated for mental illness, and being unemployed. Its philosophy is that if well-designed programs are available to youth in a convenient location and under one roof, "**they will use the services to help themselves become productive citizens.**"[25] SBYSP coordinates existing services, it does not create new ones.

Currently, there are 29 SBYSP sites in operation throughout the state, at least one in each county. All sites are located in or close to schools and offer a comprehensive range of services. Each site offers employment counseling, training and placement; drug, alcohol and family crisis counseling; tutoring; recreation; and referrals to health and social services.

In 1989, SBYSP served 19,000 youth (of a potential population of 60,000) who were eligible. Recently, Iowa and Kentucky have replicated the project. And in New Jersey, the program is expanding to serve the elementary and middle schools.

POVERTY

Currently, one in five youth is poor.[26] Poverty creates a web of barriers and limitations that for many is virtually impossible to overcome. It has been stated that environment provides the framework for individual action and aspiration. **Youth growing up in an impoverished community often feel trapped by their circumstances: they can not envision opportunities beyond what is immediately available.** For many of these young men, crime and the alternative economy may be the most positive and rewarding options available.

Every American family must deal with issues of housing, child care, education, and medical care. But the family hampered by poverty has little or no control over these fundamental issues. Those with low wage jobs are more likely to work long hours with little flexibility. Consequently, they can not afford quality day care, if any at all; are unable to provide their children with the time and attention they require; and can not afford additional supports such as before and after-school activities.

These families frequently live in substandard, overcrowded housing in unsafe neighborhoods. **Living with too little adult supervision, no positive recreational options, inadequate schools, and other problems of poverty, these youth do not attain the basic skills necessary for employment in a changing job market.** They are at profound risk of becoming involved in drugs, crime and other destructive behaviors. Recently, as the majority of businesses have moved out of urban areas, opportunities for employment have diminished. The only growth in jobs for youth has been, and will continue to be, in the service sector. The vast majority of these job openings have been located in the suburbs. Disadvantaged urban youth have a difficult time commuting to these positions and frequently face discriminatory hiring practices when applying for them.

Research indicates that youth membership in gangs and organized crime "represents a last option, not a preferred one."[27] When positive alternatives to criminal activity are available, young urban men usually choose them.

When employment opportunities are limited, there is an increased risk of criminal activity. Such involvement certainly increases young men's chances of being arrested and developing criminal records. Once they have a criminal record, they find that opportunities for work in the regular economy are further diminished. Consequently, the recidivism rate among urban young men is high.[28]

In this way, conditions of poverty have a cumulative effect on young people. It limits the way they perceive themselves and the heights they ultimately attain.

For many disadvantaged young people growing up in an impoverished community, the most effective program approach is to remove them from the pressures and constraints of their environment and expose them to a new one. This is the objective of a program administered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.), takes economically disadvantaged young people (ages 14-15) out of their community for 8 1/2 weeks in the summer and places them on a Texas public university campus for a "total immersion" work-study program. Since its inception in 1984, Y.O.U. has assisted more than 5000 young people. The program offers a wide range of support services including classroom instruction, tutoring sessions, counseling, health care, career planning, personal and social decision-making, study skills, recreational activities, and part-time employment on the campus.[29]

Last year the program was selected by the American Association of State College and Universities as one of 12 model dropout prevention programs across the nation.

Bridge Over Troubled Waters offers another innovative approach to serving high-risk, primarily homeless and runaway, youth. Bridge is a street-based multi-service youth agency for runaway and at-risk youth (ages 14-24). The program, founded in Boston, Massachusetts in 1970, serves an average of 4,000 young people annually.

Bridge offers counseling, a free medical-service van, dental services, academic tutoring, job skills training, a family life center for single mothers and their children, and housing. The philosophy of Bridge is to meet the immediate crisis needs of youth, through medical care, counseling, G.E.D. training, etc., and then to draw them into a more comprehensive range of services that will enable them to gain control of their lives.

MEDIA

When many people think of disadvantaged young men in urban areas, images of school drop-outs, gang violence, drug trafficking, crazy money, and murder over sneakers and leather jackets, come to mind. The media has sensationalized the extent of these problems to the point where the average American is scared of disadvantaged urban young men, most of whom are incorrectly assumed to be African-American.

What is the percentage of young men involved in gangs, making big money through the alternative economy, and killing each other over tennis shoes? The fact is, we do not know. There has been very little research in this area. Ethnographers have undertaken studies documenting the constraints on, and the attitudes and activities of this population, but their work tends to center around a small number of youth in a particular community.[30]

Jawanza Kunjufu believes that **the media, and specifically television images, have a profound effect on attitudes and self-esteem**. Speaking primarily of African-American youth, he argues that as young people are beginning to feel alienated from school, and as the church in the black community is losing ground, television is becoming a primary transmitter of cultural values and attitudes.

This is particularly harmful for young black and Latino men. The "crisis" of the young urban black male has been the focus of a multitude of news reports, newspaper, and magazine articles over the past year. The media have inundated the American public with negative images of these young men. Jewelle Taylor Gibbs believes that the stereotype of this population is best described by the "five d's: dumb, deprived, dangerous, deviant, and disturbed."[31] Latino young men are typically characterized as pimps and drug dealers.[32]

Research suggests that such harsh images of minority youth are shaping their understanding of what it means to be successful, regardless of their class background. According to Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu, the message among black youth is that trying to succeed (making good grades, aspiring to prestigious colleges and professions) is an expression of wanting to be white and contrary to what it means to be black.[33]

More research is needed in this area. It seems that **the widespread attention given to the actions of a small number of young inner-city black men is affecting how the majority of black youth view themselves and their futures**. This is a powerful and horrific example of how media messages affect self-esteem and aspiration.

Some believe that a crisis currently exists among black inner-city youth. The majority of inner-city black young men are poor, living in single-parent, female headed households with no positive adult male role models. Dropout rates are high. Gangs, violence and drug abuse are rampant.

What is needed, according to a growing number of people, is for successful black adult males to serve as role models and mentors for these young men. **Concerned Black Men, Inc. (CBM)** is a national organization with chapters in eight cities that teaches black men to become mentors, as well as to "sponsor a variety of programs and activities promoting educational, cultural and social development."[34] The Washington, DC-based CBM chapter, formed in 1982, provides programs such as: one-to-one mentoring; Project Northstar, a tutoring program in which successful adults are paired, one night a week, with homeless youth in a group setting; and Project 2000, in which black males become teaching assistants in inner-city elementary schools.

Another approach to serving high-risk young men is through a male-only comprehensive program. Developed in 1981 by the Mecklenburg County Health Department, **The Males Place**, is a "male family planning program designed to help teenage and young adult males achieve and maintain responsible sexual behavior and understand their role in the prevention of adolescent parenthood."[35] The Males Place operates in Charlotte, North Carolina and provides education, counseling and medical services to young men ages 15 to 24. The program provides recreational activities such as basketball, rap contests and disco to attract participants.

The program also provides sex education workshops throughout the community. It is estimated that The Males Place serves 325 - 400 young men annually through its medical clinic and another 8,000 - 12,000 through its community outreach program.

COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS

Because issues affecting disadvantaged young men in urban areas are interconnected, comprehensive programs offer the best approaches for assisting them. Although the most successful comprehensive programs vary from one community to the next, they embody a common set of principles and characteristics. These qualities are replicable and offer a glimmer of hope that one day all youth will have access to an array of supports whenever they are necessary. As Lisbeth Schorr states, in her seminal work, *Within Our Reach*:

> Model programs - no matter how special their circumstances - bring home that, even in an imperfect world, something can be done to address certain seemingly intractable social problems. They provide a vision of what can be achieved, a benchmark for judging other efforts, and - at a minimum - a takeoff point in the search for better understanding of the elements of interventions worthy of widespread implementation.[36]

While programs cannot be stamped out with a cookie cutter, following is a *list of principles* that govern successful programs, as developed by author/researcher Joy Dryfoos:[37]

- There is no single program that is the most effective and should be replicated for all youth. Programs need to be flexible to respond to the needs of their clients and the community.

- Problems are interrelated and programs should be comprehensive and holistic, rather than categorical in nature.

- Programs must be community-based.

- Interventions should attempt to change institutions rather than individuals.

- Interventions must start early before problem behaviors have become ingrained.

- Supports, services and relationships must be sustained over a long period of time. "One shot" efforts do not work.

The most *commonly agreed upon characteristics* for successful programs include that:

- they address young people on a personal level through caring relationships with adults;

- they provide a protective, family-like environment;

- they link youth to real opportunities within the community.

These elements are commonly held to be "a precondition for healthy individual development and a major lack in the lives of the young people served."[38] In addition, programs must be allowed to be flexible and creative.

There seems to be *broad agreement on the programmatic ingredients* most needed for programs to be successful:[39]

- individual attention

- neighborhood or community based multi-service approach

- trained personnel

- social and personal skills training and counseling (developing coping and resisting strategies against negative peer pressure, learning to make constructive choices about the future)

- job skills training and placement (providing basic skills training, specific job related skills, exposure to the world of work, money for participation, and/or opportunities for summer and full-time employment opportunities)
- parental involvement (visiting youth's home to talk with parents or soliciting the help of parents in the running or support of the program)
- peer involvement (an arrangement of peer support groups or older youths as instructors, tutors or mentors for younger youth)

ISSUES OF CONCERN

Discussed below are several areas in which the programmatic research is not consistent or where program results have been conflicting.

1) There is ongoing debate among service providers and youth policy makers about whether programs should focus on *prevention strategies for younger populations or intervention strategies for older youth*. The general consensus seems to be that prevention strategies are more effective than intervention programs. In addition, assisting older youth is more time and labor intensive. Nonetheless, intervention programs for 15-24 year olds are much more enduring and cost-effective than the alternatives of joblessness and prison. The average cost per-youth of a prevention/intervention program is one-half that of prison for a residential program and even less for a non-residential program.[40]

2) Confusion exists over the factors that signify a successful transition to adulthood and exactly *what is meant by the term "at-risk."* Recently, the Search Institute published a report, "The Troubled Journey: A Portrait of 6th-12th Grade Youth," a survey of the current state of youth welfare in public schools in 111 communities, across 25 states. They established criteria of 20 at-risk behaviors to systematically determine who is at-risk and what should be involved in assisting them. If we are committed to understanding the supports at-risk youth need, then it is necessary to formulate a working definition of the term and to determine the number and characteristics of youth who need assistance.

3) A series of questions arise regarding the merit of using *volunteers*. Many programs rely on volunteers. Throughout the 1980's, resources allocated to human service programs were cut. For many of these programs, the use of volunteers has become essential. Currently, there is renewed interest in volunteerism as a way to get youth involved in their communities and to activate the talents and resources of older members of society. In addition, there is growing interest in the possibilities of mentoring as a relatively inexpensive answer to issues confronting at-risk youth.

Experiences of the Eisenhower Foundation during the past ten years conclude that "reliance on voluntarism is no substitute for adequately resourced programs and adequately rewarded and trained staff."[41] Youth living in communities with high rates of crime and drug abuse and limited adult supervision frequently require the attention and skill of highly trained personnel, with more professional acumen than volunteers are able to provide.[42] In addition, volunteers in these communities can face serious risks that they are not prepared to handle.

4) Questions arise over whether to *target high-risk youth* for assistance. According to Dryfoos, there is an understanding among youth policy makers that funds to assist young people are limited. Therefore, should resources be allocated for those most at-risk or should they be used for the benefit of all youth, as in overhauling a failing public education system.[43] Another area of concern is that labeling certain youth as disadvantaged or at-risk may be harmful to their self-esteem and become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Dryfoos points to tracking as an example of what can happen when youth are classified. It negatively affects learning and lowers self-esteem for all but the highest achievers.[44]

Dryfoos concedes that there is no consensus on these issues but, "the majority of those concerned with high-risk youth seem to take the position that resources should be targeted on high-risk neighborhoods and school districts, but not on specific high-risk children."[45]

5) Is it necessary to *design programs specifically for different ethnic and racial groups?* Reverend Gary Reirson, Executive Director of The Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches (GMCC), argues that cultural awareness among those working with youth is vital but does not believe different programs need to be designed for different groups of youth.[46] For example, in order to provide support for Native American women who have been abused by their partners, GMCC has adapted its program, with great success, to incorporate men into the counseling process. GMCC has found that flexibility and sensitivity toward cultural difference is essential for program success.

6) Do *adult mentors need to be the same sex and race or ethnicity as the young male*? Much of this concern has evolved out of a belief that inner-city young black men lack adult male role models in their communities. Some argue that such relationships are absolutely necessary, others hold that while it is preferable, the primary concern is that all disadvantaged youth have at least one caring adult relationship in their life.[47]

7) The last area for concern is *program evaluation.* Evaluations are vital for determining the outcomes of a particular program, for providing data to increase our understanding about at-risk youth, and for replication of effective programs. Yet evaluations can be expensive, often require burdensome reporting methodology, and stretch scarce resources even farther.

CONCLUSION

We, as a nation, must transform our thinking about youth. **We need to stop thinking in terms of problems and trying to respond to crises, and begin to make life-long investments in youth development.** Youth want to become meaningfully involved in this society and our nation needs them now and as future adults. The programs cited above offer tangible examples of the benefits that derive from activating the resources and talents of young people.

While research is incomplete and there is much that is not known about how most effectively to work with youth, experience has given us an overview of successful programs. **We must act now to put these principles to work, so we do not lose this generation of young men.**

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13. National Crime Prevention Council, *Changing Perspectives: Youth as Resources* (Washington, DC: National Crime Prevention Council, 1990), p. 9.

14. Jawanza Kunjufu, *Developing Positive Self-Images & Discipline in Black Children* (Chicago: African-American Images, 1984), pp. 16-18.

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17. Jewelle Taylor Gibbs, ed., *Young Black and Male in America: An Endangered Species* (New York: Auburn House, 1988), p. 79.

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40. *Summary Report: Youth Investment and Community Reconstruction: Street Lessons on Drugs and Crime for the Nineties*, p. 5.

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42. Ibid.

43. *Adolescents At Risk,* pp. 236 -237.
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A CALL FOR CULTURALLY SENSITIVE PROGRAMS TO SERVE DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

America's youth population is becoming increasingly diverse, both ethnically and racially. However, this diversity is not reflected in academic success and the distribution of income. Disadvantaged minority youth are falling behind white youth in academic achievement and are not gaining the skills necessary to compete in an increasingly technology-oriented job market. Many argue that **cultural misunderstanding and an insensitivity to the differences among groups may be the reason that so many minority youth are failing academically.**

If the U.S. is to remain an economically competitive nation, it must learn to function as a multicultural society; our productivity depends on it. This requires a recognition and valuing of the differences among America's cultural and ethnic groups, in both our national spirit and in the operation of our institutions.

This report will examine the ways that community-based youth programs can build upon the cultural strengths of minority youth, respond to their unique needs and assist them in developing the necessary skills to become productive citizens. Although some public school systems are responding to changing student demographics, altering the philosophy and practice of a bureaucracy and its administrators is always a lengthy process. While that process is essential to our nation, supplemental activity is needed while schools undergo the necessary reform. Small community-based programs have the ability to respond quickly and flexibly, to attract alienated minority youth into culturally sensitive programs that build self-esteem and that motivate them to become educated and self-sufficient citizens.

Currently, little is known about the role of culture in shaping youth development. It may seem obvious that growing up Asian American, African American, Native American or Latino profoundly affects the way a young person perceives and responds to the world. However, there is very little research that confirms this assumption. There is no research base for understanding the specific ways in which youth development is shaped by cultural identity. One reason little is known about culture is that traditionally **America has believed in a *melting pot* or assimilation theory as the basis for success in this society. The result has been to undervalue the existence and importance of distinct cultures, backgrounds, and identities.** This paper will explore why this has happened and what effect it may be having on disadvantaged minority youth.

Due to the paucity of specialized research on youth program design and cultural diversity, this report will draw from a wide array of available sources. It begins with a snapshot of recent demographic trends, as well as a look at how minority youth are faring academically. Next, it examines what is known about cultural identity in terms of youth development.

There is a wealth of literature that suggests that **the way to reengage minority youth in the process of learning is to establish a multicultural curriculum.** This debate is highlighted to understand specifically how culturally-sensitive programs benefit disadvantaged minority youth. And finally, the paper reports the thinking of many program experts and youth policy specialists about the role of cultural diversity in community-based program design.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Although the total youth population is declining, the number of minority youth is declining at a much slower rate than white youth. As a result, minority youth are rapidly becoming a larger proportion of the total youth population.

Between 1980 and 1995, the youth population, ages 15 to 24, is expected to decrease by 35 million or 18%.[1] This represents a decrease from 15% of the total population in the early 1980's to 13.5% by 1995.[2] By 1995, more than 30% of the total youth population is expected to be minority, an increase of one-third from 1980.[3] By 1995 the youth population is expected to be 15% African American, 12% Latino, and 4.5% Native American and Asian and Pacific Islander.[4] The proportion of African American youth is projected to increase from 13.7% in 1980 to 15.3% in 1995.[5] During the eighties, the proportion of Latino youth increased 14% and Native American and Asian and Pacific Islander 7%.[6]

Currently, minorities of all ages comprise 20% of the United States population and are expected to reach 30% by 2030.[7] In states such as California, Texas, Florida, Illinois, New York, and New Jersey, minorities are expected to become an even greater percentage of the total population. By 2010 ethnic and racial minorities will be the majority in California and Texas.[8]

Similarly, many major metropolitan areas already have a majority of ethnic and racial minorities. African Americans represent the majority of the population in Detroit, Atlanta, Baltimore, New Orleans and the District of Columbia. In El Paso, San Antonio, and Miami, Latinos are the majority.[9]

Due to immigration and high fertility rates, Latinos are the fastest growing subgroup. Since 1980 the Latino population has grown 5 times the rate of the non-Latino population.[10] Between 1980 and 1989, the total population grew 9.5%, the non-Latino population by 7.5% and the Latino population by 38.9%.[11] The number of Latinos grew two and one-half times as fast as African Americans in this time period.[12]

Latinos and African Americans are a much younger population than whites. In 1988 the average age of Latinos was 25.5 years, African Americans 27.3 years, and whites 33.1 years.[13]

Again, due to the youthfulness of the minority population, high fertility rates, and immigration minority youth will account for almost the total increase in elementary and secondary enrollment between 1990 and 2000. Today 22 of the 25 largest central city school systems have a majority of ethnic and racial minorities.[14]

The increase in the school-age population has been primarily among Latino youth. Between 1984 and 1988 the number of Latino youth enrolled in public school grew from 3.6 million (8.8%) to 4.3 million (10.5%) of a total school-age population of 41.4 million.[15] Between 1985 and 2000 the public school enrollment is expected to reach 44 million, with an increase of 2.4 million Latinos, 1.7 million African Americans and 66,000 white students.[16] By 2020, 46% of school age children will be minorities.[17]

These demographic trends are producing profound effects on American school systems, the business community, our political system, and many other institutions. According to the Population Reference Bureau, **"The changing racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. will put increasing pressure on many of the basic institutions of our society and challenge our fundamental beliefs about inclusion, acculturation, and nondiscrimination."**[18] (Emphasis Added)

EDUCATION

Educational achievement has traditionally been a measure with which Americans gauge success. Despite significant gains in high school completion and college enrollment rates among minorities during the 1970's and early 1980's, they, with the exception of Asian Americans, continue to lag behind whites. **There have been no further gains in high school completion for African Americans since 1984: between 1985 and 1989 Latino high school graduation rates declined.[19] Similarly, college enrollment rates for Latino, African American, and Native American youth ages 18-24 have stagnated in the latter half of the eighties.[20]**

Minority youth, with the exception of Asian Americans, are the least likely to complete high school. Among those who do graduate, minority youth are the least likely to enroll in college, and of those who enter college, minority youth are the least likely to obtain a four-year degree. In addition, they have the highest rate of enrollment below grade level.
Minority youth, especially males, are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school (and these rates are increasing) and the least likely to be enrolled in gifted programs. They are more likely than white youth to attend racially segregated schools located in poor neighborhoods and to be taught by the least educated teachers. And lastly, even with the number of Latino and Asian students increasing, the availability of bilingual services has decreased. Only in California and Arizona have bilingual services increased, and of those states, only 35.6% and 15%, respectively, of the eligible Latino population, were enrolled in bilingual programs.[21]

U.S. Census Bureau statistics report that, in 1989 one in five (19.5%) Latino youth ages 16-17 dropped out of high school, compared to one in sixteen (6%) African Americans and one in fifteen (7.1%) whites.[22] For 18-24 year olds during this same time period, 44% of Latinos, 44% of Native Americans, 23.9% of African Americans, and 18% of whites had not completed high school.[23]

The number of college bound youth is diminishing. Between 1980 and 1989 the total number of 18-24 year olds dropped 12%. During the same period, the number of 18-24 year old whites declined 15%, African Americans 4%, while Latinos have increased 39%.[24] Despite being smaller in actual number, a much larger percentage of white students enroll in college.

In 1989, 28.7% of Latino high school graduates were enrolled in college, compared to 30.8% of African Americans and 38.8% of whites. Of the total number of 18-24 year olds, 16.1% of Latinos, 23.5% of African Americans, and 31.8% of whites were enrolled in college in 1989.[25]

Since 1986, college participation rates of African American women have surpassed African American men. In fact, **African American men have the lowest enrollment**

rate of almost all subgroups. Only 19.6% of all African American men ages 18-24 attended college, while 31.5% of white men were enrolled.[26] In 1989, 33.8% of African American female high school graduates were enrolled in college, compared to 27.1% of African American men.[27] Since the 1970's, Latino men and women with high school degrees have been enrolling in college at comparable rates, 27.9% of men and 26.6% of women in 1989.[28]

The persistence and degree of attainment of African American and Hispanic students in traditional four-year colleges are very low. Comparable data are not available for Native American students because their participation in these institutions is extremely small, 0.7% of the total collegiate enrollment.[29] In 1987 only 14.7% of Latino high school graduates ages 25 to 29 had completed four or more years of college, compared to 13.6% of African Americans and 26.7% of whites.[30] American Indians, Latinos, and African Americans are more likely to attend two year institutions than Asian American and white students.

The stagnation in minority academic achievement is happening at a time when high-wage employment opportunities for uncredentialed workers are being eliminated due to the decline in manufacturing jobs. Industry has shut down or moved from the urban areas to the South, or more recently overseas, where resources and labor are cheaper. The only job growth has been in the low-wage retail trade and service sectors. Besides offering low wages, service sector positions provide few benefits and do not afford real advancement opportunities. In addition, the education requirements for substantive employment are escalating as future productivity mandates that the U.S. become increasingly technologically oriented.[31] In short, **if America is to compete in the world economy and at least maintain its current standard of living, it must engage the talents and potential of minority and poor youth as well as white and affluent young people.**

One explanation for the low academic performance of disadvantaged minority youth is that their learning styles and classroom behavior, manifestations of their culture, differ from that of white children and white and middle-class teachers. The fact that students have different cultural backgrounds from their teachers, administrators and one another is just beginning to be recognized by educators and service delivery personnel. Even today, however, youth are educated to believe that if they are going to make it in this society they must assimilate to white middle-class values and traditions. This has been most evident in the lack of bilingual programs for Latino youth and the Euro-centric basis for the public school curriculum.

According to Asa Hilliard, it is difficult for many Americans to accept the existence of a variety of cultures. People are grounded in the notion of a *melting pot and may even believe that the ideas of democracy are threatened by the notion of cultural pluralism.*[32] Yet, he argues, the two should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. **"In fact the true test of a democracy may well be the degree to which it provides an environment within which religious pluralism, political pluralism and yes, cultural pluralism can exist."** [33]

CULTURE

There are many definitions of culture. According to Edward T. Hall, culture is "invisible", and understood as the "normal or natural ways of acting, feeling and being."[34] Asa Hilliard believes that culture is " 'Consistency in the behavior of a person or a group that tends to be habitual'- the manifestation of a predisposition to approach things in a characteristic way."[35] Kenneth Cushner and Gregory Trifonovitch posit that there are objective elements of culture such as "artifacts, clothing and food," as well as subjective aspects, "attitudes, values, norms of behavior, and the roles people assume."[36]

For a developing young person, culture, like language, is transmitted affectively rather than cognitively through the process of socialization.[37] "Socialization is the process by which individuals learn what is required to be a successful member of a group."[38] Culture is the prescribed set of qualities and traits transmitted by a group that provide a framework for youth development. Culture includes norms of behavior, values, familial arrangements, gender roles, and future expectations that the young learn through observation, trail and error, and constant reinforcement by other members of the group.[39]

According to Cushner and Trifonovitch, culture is the means by which a group makes sense of the world and organizes incoming stimuli.[40] They cite the example of a Westerner considering the concept of a "dog." The images of companion, pet, friend come to mind. A dog to a Muslim ordinarily implies a dirty, smelly creature that should be avoided, similar to a rat or pig in a Westerner's mind. Pacific Islanders and Filipinos equate dogs with food.[41] These understandings are dictated by culture.

Because culture is understood as the normal or habitual way of thinking and acting, people are rarely conscious of their own cultural characteristics. The tendency, then, is to assume that everyone operates from the same cultural foundation.[42]

In essence, this thinking denies the existence of other cultures and consequently, creates the perception that the actions of other groups are pathological or distortions of accurate ways of thinking and behaving.[43]

Such conflicts, especially when they occur among the dominant group and subordinate groups, can be devastating. In this country, white males control the access to power, quality education, and wealth. **Cross-cultural conflicts frequently result in the functional exclusion of women and minorities from the political and economic process.**

For young people, cross-cultural conflict and exclusion frequently occurs within the education system. **Scholars argue that many minority group children have different learning, behavioral and, in some cases, language styles than whites.** When white teachers are unaware of the cultural norms of their pupils and use their own culture as a reference point from which to judge a student's intellectual aptitude, misunderstandings typically occur.

Such misunderstandings may later result in tracking, expulsion, and lowered expectations by teachers toward students. As noted above, it is well documented that African American and Latino youth are more likely than white youth to be suspended, expelled and tracked into decelerated programs. As Asa Hilliard states, "The literature on teachers' expectations of students is generally very clear. The images that teachers and others hold of children and their potential have a major influence on their decisions to use the full range of their professional skills. **If a teacher mistakes a child's differing style for lack of intellectual potential, the child will likely become educationally deprived as the teacher 'teaches down' to the estimated level."**[44]

Cushner and Trifonovitch offer another example of a typical cross cultural misunderstanding: many African American and Latino youth are taught that it is rude to look an adult in the eyes, especially when being scolded. The respectful reaction would be to look away or at the ground. White children are taught to look directly at the adult that is talking to them, especially when being reprimanded. Consequently, a white teacher may misread the reaction of a African American or Latino child when that child is actually showing respect in the manner which he/she understands to be appropriate. Such instances, repeated over time, lead teachers to misread student's attitude and intellectual potential. Teachers then begin to communicate with students in dysfunctional ways based upon their low expectations of them.[45] Cultural misunderstandings may lead teachers to transfer these attitudes to the group, thereby promoting racial intolerance among students.

Research conducted by Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu suggests that many African American youth have internalized the messages that they are destined to fail academically and have developed a coping mechanism; they have quit trying. In order to escape the burden of failure, many African American youth have developed an "oppositional cultural frame of reference which includes devices for protecting their identity and for maintaining boundaries between them and white Americans."[46] According to these new values, trying to succeed, i.e. making good grades and aspiring to attend college, is a manifestation of wanting to be white and contrary to what it means to be African American.

As this country becomes increasingly diverse and requirements for employment increase, **the United States must learn to function productively as a multicultural society.** To date very few schools and work environments have tried to cultivate cross-cultural interaction, to eliminate cultural barriers or employ a variety of culturally-grounded means to similar successful ends . According to Cushner and Trifonovitch, **"Effective intercultural communication occurs when both parties of an interaction suspend judgement, seek to understand the reasons behind another's actions, and then become able to explain another's behavior according to its intent."**[47]

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

There is a growing consensus among educators that public school curricula have been premised entirely upon Western thought and the contributions of Western cultures. This philosophy has reinforced attitudes of racial inferiority and minimized the contributions of American minorities and nonwestern civilizations in the history of the United States. When studied at all, **nonwestern cultures are seen principally as enriching the dominant culture (*melting pot*) and are not examined or valued as having their own distinct identity.**

Many believe multicultural education is a solution to the declining academic achievement of minority youth, especially low-income and African American youth. It is seen as a way to build pride and self-esteem among minority youth and increase their academic performance. In Atlanta, Detroit, District of Columbia, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and New York City, efforts are underway to infuse a multicultural perspective into the elementary or secondary school curriculum.

Proponents of multicultural education argue that in an increasingly pluralistic society, **it is necessary for all young people to understand and respect the cultural tradi-**

tions of others. In order to function as a multicultural society, American youth must learn to value and to interact with others different than themselves. In addition, multicultural supporters reason that **society owes all students, and minority students in particular, an accurate account of their history and culture.**

By denying minority youth knowledge about the accomplishments and contributions of their ancestors, they are made to feel culturally inferior to whites. It is thought that exposing minority youth solely to a Euro-centric curriculum lowers their self-esteem, reduces cultural pride, and convinces many youth that they and their people have nothing to contribute to this society. As a result, many minority young people feel alienated from, or openly hostile toward, teachers, schools, and the dominant society.

Those who feel the most alienated from the dominant culture are low-income urban minority youth. Over the last twenty years the economic viability of many inner-city communities has eroded. According to William Julius Wilson, middle class African Americans and whites have relocated from urban areas to the suburbs.[48] Industry, which once provided a variety of employment opportunities for low skilled urban workers, has left the inner-city. During this period, immigrants have moved to the central cities of both coasts and to Florida. As a result, low-income minority youth are becoming increasingly isolated into racially segregated communities that are virtually cut off from the American mainstream.[49] They attend racially segregated schools, are taught by underqualified teachers and have few opportunities for employment.

Thomas Kochman believes that **multicultural education is *particularly relevant* in attempting to improve the academic achievement and self-esteem of *low-income minority youth*.** Racially isolated minority youth are more likely than middle and upper class minority youth to have cultural perspectives in conflict with the white mainstream.[50] Due to their physical and social isolation, the culture of disadvantaged minority youth may be less affected by, and vastly differ from, the value systems of whites. Middle and upper class youth have social contacts or a level of education that brings them more in line with the values and norms of the dominant culture.[51]

In addition, proponents of multicultural education believe it is **particularly important for African American youth, as they are the only racial group that has been institutionally denied knowledge about, and any connection to, their homeland.** As a result of slavery, many African American children have no sense of cultural continuity. African American youth need to understand the "deep structural cultural unity that can be found among many African populations all over the world."[52] This could be a source of pride and strength that could provide new hope and meaning to their lives. *Washington Post* columnist E. Sargent describes his feelings upon being introduced to African American history:

- While I have always been a good student, I became a better one as a result of my sense of black history. I began to notice that my public-school teachers very rarely mentioned black contributions to the sciences, math, and other areas of study.... They never talked about ways that blacks could collectively use their education to solve the great economic and social problems facing the race.

- My mind was undergoing a metamorphosis that made the world change its texture. Everything became relevant because I knew blacks had an impact on all facets of life. I felt a part of things that most blacks thought only white people had a claim to. Knowing that there is a speculation that Beethoven was black - a mulatto(sic) - made me enjoy classical music. "Man, why do you listen to that junk? That's white music," my friend would say. "Wrong. Beethoven was a brother."[53]

Multicultural education is taking root in many metropolitan public school districts that have large enrollments of minority students. Although it is gaining attention as a way to motivate and reengage minority youth's interest in learning, there is very little empirical data that proves multicultural education has such an effect. According to Faheen Ashanti, **"What's happening is that we've got to the point that people are willing to try anything now that looks like it might have a promise."**[54] Over the past five years Ashanti has been testing the effects of Afro-centric curricula on African American youth. He exposed 157 college students to yearlong classes on Africa and African Americans. The study proved successful: the student's grades improved overall by one letter grade.

While many educators believe that multicultural education has value, the extent to which curricula should be modified to reflect other cultural perspectives is a highly contentious matter.

The pluralism approach represented by Diane Ravitch and others contends that "the U.S. has a common culture that is multicultural." They suggest that multicultural education should stress the similarities among groups rather than their differences in order to transmit one cohesive American story. Pluralists oppose the "ethnic cheerleading" or particularist approach to education which emphasizes the unique characteristics or events of one group. Ravitch argues that our education system is not Euro-centric; it is *Americentric.* "Whether they intend to or not, the message of the particularists implies that children who are members of racial and ethnic minorities are not part of American culture; that they must look elsewhere for their heritage; and that American culture belongs to white Europeans."[55]

Others believe that the best way to reverse the damage done by a Euro-centric curriculum is to provide an Afro-centric perspective. Asa Hilliard designed a multicultural infusion program that is being implemented in the Portland and Atlanta public schools. According to his plan, "baseline essays" are written about contributions of African and African Americans in six academic disciplines and teachers are expected to integrate these essays into the overall curriculum.

A more drastic approach supported by Molefi Kete Asanti and others is being developed in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Two *African American Immersion* elementary schools are being developed to offer "an Afro-centric curriculum, as well as extended school time for counseling on such topics as entrepreneurship and male sexual responsibility."56 The theory behind these programs is that because African American young men are vastly overrepresented among statistics for drop-outs, drug abuse, crime, and joblessness a program designed specifically for them is necessary. Although open to anyone, the program will be designed to meet the specific needs of the African American male population.

Programs similar to the Milwaukee Immersion Schools are being developed in New York City, the District of Columbia, Detroit, and Minneapolis. Information available on the New York proposal states that they will include Latino as well as African American young men. There is virtually no information on how this will be accomplished.

These new programs are focusing on African American youth probably because they comprise the majority of the minority population in Milwaukee, New York, and Washington. One Latino policy specialist has suggested that because East Coast Latinos and African Americans live in close proximity to one another, combined programs may work for them.

In California, the demographics are very different. There, Mexican Americans are the largest minority group; they are very poor and quite isolated from other racial/ethnic groups. In addition, there are over 80 languages spoken by students in the California public school system. If immersion schools prove to be an answer, states like California will have a difficult time replicating them, given the large number of racial and ethnic groups that makeup their population.

The idea of these racially and gender segregated schools has captured nationwide attention and has become a very sensitive issue. Many people argue that it is a return to the concept of *separate but equal* which the Supreme Court ruled against in Brown v. Board of Education in 1954. According to Kenneth B. Clark, segregation stigmatizes young people and makes them feel inferior, even when it is sought by African Americans rather than whites.[57]

Proponents of the programs argue that they are not creating segregated institutions but rather responding to the needs of the existing student population, which is almost completely minority. They stress that the school will be open to all youth, but will be geared to the specific needs of the African American male population. They assume that the programs will function like magnet schools, one approach among many types of alternative programs available to those who desire them. And lastly, these programs are seen as a way to target funds for a population of young people who need immediate and thorough intervention programs.

The National Council of La Raza stresses that **the public school system will have to undergo fundamental change in its philosophy, structure, and teaching practices before it can effectively educate the increasing proportion of minority youth.**[58] Given its bureaucratic nature, decentralized administration, and people's resistance to change, this process will take a very long time. In the meantime, community-based programs are uniquely positioned to provide the immediate services and supplemental education that minority children often need.

PROGRAM DESIGN

To understand how youth programs should be designed to take into account the cultural differences among young people, numerous program experts and youth policy specialists were contacted. Specifically, they were asked whether programs should be designed for, and delivered to, specific racial and ethnic groups of youth or whether it was more appropriate to serve youth generally in an integrated program.

Responses were consistent. **Programs must be designed to meet the specific needs of the community they intend to serve. They must reflect the demographic composition of the community and must remain flexible to respond to changes within it.** Regardless of whether a program serves a specific cultural group of youth or a mix of populations, the program must be developed from a knowledge of the cultures represented in the community, attempt to build youth's cultural pride and self-esteem, promote cross-cultural understanding, reduce racial hostility, and prepare youth to function productively in the larger society.

It was agreed by those consulted that **all aspects of youth serving programs, including personnel, literature, and services rendered must be respectful of, and attempt to reflect, their clients' cultural identity.** For example, program brochures depicting white children attending the symphony probably would not appeal to inner-city African American youth.[59] This does not mean that a program must be designed for a specific cultural group and delivered by members of that group. While such programs may have an easier time attracting isolated disadvantaged minority young people, that level of cultural specificity is not essential for success.

Assuming programs and personnel are culturally sensitive and embody the characteristics discussed above, programs with different racial and ethnic mixtures of youth may be appropriate at different times and within different communities. For example, *El Puente*, a multiservice youth development program was designed and created to respond to the specific needs of a disadvantaged Latino community in Brooklyn, New York. Because they serve a completely Latino population, their staff is almost entirely Latino. On the other hand, *Roca* is a multicultural teen pregnancy prevention program located in Chelsea, Massachusetts, a community that is over 50% Latino, 35% white, 12% Southeast Asian and 2% African American. They have a multicultural staff to reflect their community's youth population. These programs are successful because they respond to the needs and the constituency of the community they serve.

The racial and ethnic make-up of communities change over time. Programs must respond to these transformations. *The Door*, a multiservice youth development center in New York City, began in the early 1970's as a runaway youth program for white young people coming to New York. As the demographics of the Door's neighborhood have changed, the Door has adapted its program to meet the needs of their community. As Robert Johnson, a physician at The Door points out, "Our population changed from white kids who were homeless by choice to black kids who were homeless by force."[60]

Within a program there may be times to separate youth into gender-specific or race-specific groups. For example, attempting to foster cross-cultural understanding and interaction may best be accomplished in an integrated group. Discussing issues of adolescent male responsibility should probably be conducted in a male only setting. According to the literature describing *Mutual Caring, Mutual Sharing,* a training module for educating teens about sexuality issues, "...there are times that it may be helpful to meet in sex-separate groups. There is some evidence that peer group pressures are greater in male groups and that there is a greater likelihood of changing male behavior and attitudes in the context of a peer group."[61] **The point remains, programs must be flexible and able to respond to the particular needs and concerns of those they serve.**

Although there are many community-based programs that are culturally sensitive, **many mainstream social service programs still operate from a largely white, middle class perspective.** According to a study of prevention programs for youth and their families conducted by Stephen Small, the majority of existing programs are designed for white, middle-class families with two first time, married parents. They operate from the assumption that youth live in stable households with adequate resources and face few risk factors, such as: crime; violence; social and economic isolation; inadequate schools; and racism. In addition, "Programs typically assume that participants are fairly well-educated, have the ability to read and articulate their thoughts and feelings, and can learn and apply fairly abstract principles about human relationships and children."[62]

One manifestation of cultural bias within the social service system is the paucity of bilingual programs. Many minority people can not obtain the services they need due solely to language barriers. In addition, to qualify for social service benefits, a host of forms must be completed. Rarely are these forms available in any language other than English. Even when forms are translated, their bureaucratic style often creates a barrier for low-income people.

On one level it is necessary for service providers to be culturally sensitive out of respect for their clients; in other instances, it can mean life or death. For example, a Latino woman may go to a health service agency for assistance. There, she is educated about the risk of AIDS and told that using a condom would reduce her chances of becoming infected. If her partner is not familiar with condom usage, then she may be counseled to put it on him. According to one Latino health counselor, this advice may set the woman up to be battered.

Within the Latin community gender roles are clearly defined. It is very important to men to maintain control in their sexual relationship. If a woman were to introduce a condom into the relationship, or more controversially, attempt to put the condom on the male, it could be viewed as a threat to his masculinity. This act could place the woman at risk of being victimized by her partner. Interventions, if they are to be effective, must be designed with an understanding of the cultural norms of those they attempt to serve.

CONCLUSION

Inner-city youth are becoming increasingly diverse, increasingly poor, and increasingly isolated. Minorities comprise a growing proportion of the total population. Yet, disadvantaged minorities continue to lag behind whites in educational achievement and every other measures of success in American society. It is essential that this nation learn to cope with, and garner the most from, its multicultural populace. America's productive future depends upon its ability to create a truly viable multicultural society.

Public and private systems must make a conscious effort to accommodate and respond to the specific needs of disadvantaged minority youth. The first step is understanding the role of culture in identity formation, to acknowledge the differences among people, and to begin to value those differences.

While larger public institutions may be slow to change given the nature of bureaucracy and large organizations, community based programs are poised to make the changes necessary to respond to the needs of youth in their neighborhoods. Their role can be to foster cultural understanding and pride among youth, and to provide culturally sensitive services and skills. Thus, these programs enable young people to make a healthy transition into adulthood as productive members of our society.

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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This listing includes sources utilized by the Forum on Public/Private Social Concern in 1990-1991 for its research on disadvantaged young men in urban areas.

The annotated bibliographic entries are categorized by issues of adolescent pregnancy, black male youth, comparative studies, crime prevention/neighborhood development, economics and employment, education, ethnographic studies, and general overviews.

An alphabetical listing follows the annotated entries.

GENERAL OVERVIEWS

Center for the Study of Social Policy. *Kids Count Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being*. Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1991.
The Center for the Study of Social Policy, a national research collection and policy organization, examining the status of children in the U.S., has just published its second annual *Kids Count Data Book*. This is a children's census that provides current national and state level statistics on child welfare.

Among the areas of risk highlighted are the number of low birth weight babies; infant mortality rates; child death rates (ages 1-14); teen violent death rates (ages 15-19); number of teen out-of-wedlock births; juvenile incarceration rates; number of children in poverty; and high school graduation rates.

The report enumerates trends throughout the 1980's, revealing improvement in only three areas: infant mortality, child deaths, and high school graduation. The data tables include a profile of minority groups in the U.S., which reveals disparities in the child welfare status among whites, blacks, and Hispanics.

Children's Defense Fund. *Children 1990, A Report Card, Briefing Book, and Action Primer*. Washington, D.C.: Children's Defense Fund, 1990.
To educate the public about the needs of and solutions to problems facing children, this report ranks states' progress through the 1980's in providing services to children. The data measure the status of children using ten indicators: pre-natal care; infant mortality; low birth weight; teen birth-rate; births to unmarried parents; paternities established; child poverty; housing affordability; high school graduation attainment; and youth unemployment.

The data also rank states' adequacy of investments in programs for children by ten additional indicators: Medicaid coverage for pregnant women and infants; Medicaid coverage for children; nutrition assistance; early education programs; quality child care; child support enforcement; AFDC increases; rent vs. AFDC; student-teacher ratios; and youth employment efforts.

The report proposes that citizens and public officials take certain steps to make child welfare a national priority. For example, CDF urges citizens, parents, and child advocates to inform federal, state, and local leaders of the need for quality child care and other services for children and families. In addition, public officials and the media should publicize the status of children in their communities to seek a better understanding of relevant local issues. The guide outlines promises made by President Bush, Congressional leaders, and governors in areas of children, health, child care, education and Head Start; polls of public opinion on children's issues; and 1989 voting records of Members of Congress.

Children's Defense Fund. *S.O.S. America! A Children's Defense Fund Budget*. Washington, D.C.: Children's Defense Fund, 1990.
In *S.O.S. America*, the Children's Defense Fund outlines its 1991 agenda to abolish child poverty and to obtain academic achievement and a secure future for all U.S. children. CDF's proposed budget of $4.58 billion would establish comprehensive child care in the U.S.; extend Head Start and other early education programs; increase aid to children and families for health and nutrition through programs such as Medicaid and Special Supplementary Food Programs for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and maintain and extend intervention programs that protect children from abuse, violence, and neglect.

The report examines current trends and what has and can be done in areas of family income/employment, child care and development, health care, education, youth leadership, and housing. According to CDF, the U.S. does have the means to improve services to children and to strengthen families. They recommend actions that could be taken by the federal, state, local, and private sectors to promote child and family support.

CDF proposes options to President Bush's 1991 Budget to create more funds for child and family welfare programming. Instead of buying two B-2 Stealth bombers, for example, CDF suggests allocating those funds to serve 2.7 million additional children in remedial education services. The appendix includes national and international statistics on child welfare, comparing maternal and child health care conditions; infant mortality rates; spending on elementary and secondary education; and state level funding of programs to assist children.

Dryfoos, Joy G. *Adolescents At Risk: Prevalence and Prevention*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
Dryfoos, an expert researcher and writer in the field of adolescent development, presents her research on the interrelated problem behaviors of adolescent delinquency, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and academic failure. Pinpointing areas of general agreement on what is known and what works in the area of youth program design, Dryfoos suggests how to build this knowledge into a more comprehensive system of youth services.

Adolescents at Risk examines more than 100 school- and community-based model programs that have been successful or have the potential for success in modifying the problem behaviors of high-risk youth. Among those described are Positive Action through Holistic Education (PATHE), a school-based program in South Carolina for the prevention of delinquency; the Cambridge and Somerville Program for Alcohol Rehabilitation (CASPAR), a school and community program in Massachusetts for the prevention of substance abuse; Mantalk, a community-based program in Winston-Salem, North Carolina for the prevention of teen pregnancy; and the Atlanta Partnership of Business and Education, a community-wide multifaceted program in Georgia for the prevention of school failures and drop-outs.

Feldman, Shirley S. and Glen R. Elliott. *At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.
At the Threshold, a report supported by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, provides a comprehensive and multidisciplinary overview of what is known about normal adolescent development and what is missing from currently available literature. Feldman (Deputy Director of the Stanford Center for the Study of Families, Children, and Youth) and Elliott (Director of Child and Adolescent Psychology at the University of California, San Francisco) enumerate areas of promising research while bringing together some of the most prominent research on adolescent development from biological, social, and psychological perspectives. The book is intended for academicians, social workers, policy makers, parents, and others interested in the most current information on adolescent development.

Lutheran Brotherhood. RespecTeen Program. *The Troubled Journey: A Portrait of 6th-12th Grade Youth*. Minneapolis: 1990.
The RespecTeen Program, sponsored by Lutheran Brotherhood, serves youth across the U.S. through networks of adolescents, families, schools, communities, and religious groups. This report is unique in that it attempts to quantify factors that place youth at-risk by determining how many youth in a given population are at-risk and what characteristics place them in this category. Such information is essential for planning services that will address the needs of at-risk youth.

The report details a survey of public schools in 25 states that questions 46,799 students (grades 6-12) concerning their conduct, attitudes, values, sexual activity, substance abuse, family functioning, interests, and needs. Various data define the indicators and patterns of 20 at-risk behaviors by grade, gender, and ethnicity/race, including binge drinking, vandalism, sexual activity, and attempted suicide. For prevention of certain at-risk behaviors, the report lists effective social skills and values ("assets") that should be instilled in youth. Prevention is most successful, the report stresses, when promoted through partnerships among parents, schools, and community groups.

Miranda, Leticia, and Julia Teresa Quiroz. *The Decade of the Hispanic: An Economic Retrospective.* Washington, D.C.: National Council of La Raza, 1990.
This report analyzes U.S. Census data that depict seven trends in the economic status of Hispanics during the 1980's: stagnating family incomes and high poverty; increased poverty among children; significant number of female-headed households; decline in economic status of married-couple families; substantial income disparity; unequal benefits from education; decreasing earnings for Hispanic men; and increasing earnings for Hispanic women. The report examines factors contributing to these trends, including the concentration in low-wage, unstable jobs, undereducation, immigration, cut-backs in federal programs, and discrimination.

Among other possible policy interventions, NCLR recommends increasing the minimum wage rate and expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit; increasing funding for educational programs such as Head Start; supporting child care and job training in Hispanic communities; and enforcing civil rights laws to reduce employment discrimination.

Schorr, Lisbeth B., and Daniel Schorr. *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*. New York: Doubleday, 1988.
In *Within Our Reach*, Lisbeth Schorr, a professor at the Harvard University Medical School, analyzes successful federal and local prevention programs for at-risk children and adolescents in areas of family planning, prenatal care, family support, pediatric health care, early schooling, and child care. She advocates early intervention and considers programs successful only if they are intensive, comprehensive, and offer long-term improvements. Among the many programs Schorr cites are: Head Start and Special Supplementary Food Programs for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) at the federal level; and Baltimore's Johns Hopkins storefront program for pregnant adolescents and New York's IDS Harlem Program for preschoolers, at the local level.

Research on programs that serve at-risk youth has not been adequately disseminated to public policy advocates, administrators, and academics. Schorr believes such knowledge is essential in developing effective programs to solve the serious problems facing today's youth.

ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

Children's Defense Fund. Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Clearinghouse. *Latino Youths at a Crossroads*. Washington, D.C.: Children's Defense Fund, 1990.
Data on the status of Latino youth presented in this report reveal that this diverse and rapidly growing segment of the youth population is more at risk of becoming pregnant, dropping out of school, and living in poverty than any other group of youth in the U.S..

To illustrate the severity of this problem, the report provides statistics on the increasing number of births to Latino teens and unmarried women, as well as the critical lack of available health care, education, and employment opportunities for Latinos.

CDF believes that improving educational achievement for Latino youth is the answer to reducing the high rates of teen pregnancies, school failures, and youth poverty. These changes, however, can only take place in a society that is informed of the cultural needs and the potential of the Latino population. To increase the achievement of Latino youth and help them become more productive members of the society, CDF recommends improvements in the quality and availability of education; parent education and involvement in the community; school-to-work transition; high school degree attainment; college enrollment; services to families with young parents; and public awareness of the diversity and needs of the Latino community.

Dryfoos, Joy G. *Putting the Boys in the Picture: A Review of Programs to Promote Sexual Responsibility Among Young Males*. Santa Cruz: Network Publications, 1988.
This report addresses the significant role of the young male in preventing pregnancy and reviews literature, interviews, studies of young males, and statistics on their current socioeconomic status. Data on sexual behavior and contraception use reveal an apparent lack of understanding and sense of responsibility on the part of the males to prevent pregnancy. Dryfoos explains that these attitudes are symptoms of society's problems, and she stresses the underlying need, especially in the case of disadvantaged young males, for schools and community groups to improve the prospects of a better life for all young males.

Dryfoos outlines current programs serving young males in schools and health institutions, such as condom distribution, sex education, and school-based health facilities. She recommends extended services and efforts to promote general awareness among young males of their sexual responsibility, including large-scale and free confidential condom distribution; expansion of family planning programs to incorporate more young males; and the general adaptation of young males' sexual behavior through social-skills training, media campaigns, adult role models, and recreational services.

BLACK MALE YOUTH

African American Male Task Force. *Educating American Males: A Dream Deferred*. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, 1990.
The African-American Male Task Force was established in 1990 by the Milwaukee Public Schools' Board of Directors in response to the deteriorating status of African-American males in school achievement and community life. The Task Force recommends short- and long-term strategies directed at district officials and local school personnel to improve the educational experience of African-American males students.

Maintaining that all students can learn at increasingly higher levels, the Task Force calls for more recognition of African-American history and culture; more flexible study schedules, both during and outside of traditional school hours; a greater number of African-American teachers, especially males; more individualized attention in the classroom to address the different learning needs of some students; and the establishment of academies at all grade levels with special Afro-centric programs.

Long-term strategies include a complete restructuring of the school system and curriculum design; the development of alternative school discipline policies; and a greater participation by both African-American and white communities in school, as well as community improvements to help reverse the current downward trend.

Committee to Study the Status of The Black Male in New Orleans Public Schools. *Educating Black Male Youth: A Moral and Civic Imperative*. New Orleans: Orleans Parish School Board, 1988.
In 1987, the New Orleans Public Schools formed The Committee to Study the Status of the Black Male Student. The Committee was established to document the challenges and advancements of the black male student in the local public school system. This report outlines the ten-month-long study of the educational performance and progress of black male students in the city's public school system.

School system data, arranged by race and grade, denote enrollment, student retention, suspensions and expulsions, dropouts, and general academic achievement. Results from surveys of area teachers, students, parents, and the community are presented, as well as a summary of four public hearings conducted for the study.
The final recommendations by the Committee include: racism workshops for school personnel; more active parent involvement in school activities; mandatory skills development courses for middle and senior high school students; hiring of more male elementary teachers and teacher's aides; and improved communication among students, teachers, schools, and the business community. The Committee outlines pilot programs to be initiated, such as an all male magnet school, an on-site intervention program for at-risk students, a school in which uniforms are mandatory, and making school buildings accessible after hours for educational and community activities.

Gibbs, Jewelle Taylor, ed. *Young, Black, and Male In America: An Endangered Species*. New York: Auburn House, 1988.
Gibbs, a professor and researcher of adolescent psychosociology at the School of Social Welfare of the University of California, Berkeley, has served on numerous boards and panels concerning children and poverty. This volume includes ten essays on the condition of black male youth in the U.S. from historical, social, economical, and political perspectives.

The articles on education, employment, delinquency, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, health care, mental health, and public policy analyze the disastrous effects of economic and social isolation on this generation of black male youth. Gibbs's text draws attention to the status of black youth's lack of access to the mainstream economy and how their alienation affects society as a whole.

Gibbs and the other contributing authors hope to motivate a wide audience in both white and black communities to develop more programs, such as Head Start, Job Corps, health care and nutrition programs, to encourage and support the positive development and contributions of young black males.
Jones, Reginald L., ed. *Black Adolescents*. Berkeley: Cobb & Henry, 1989.
A former clinical psychologist, Jones is a professor of Afro-American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. This collection of nineteen articles by psychologists, educators, sociologists, and other scholars examines conditions of black adolescent life in the U.S..

Jones's volume engages the subject from economic, social, demographic, and educational perspectives. Among the issues discussed are mental health, health care, peer relations, career development, pregnancy, substance abuse, and crime. Contributors offer ideas for studying and serving the urgent needs of these youth.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs, for example, addresses early intervention and community involvement in substance abuse control. Iris Baly discusses the psycho-social factors of career and vocational development of black youth, and Darnell Hawkins and Nolan Jones detail the effects of imprisonment and correctional policy on young black males.

COMPARATIVE STUDIES

Gibbs, Jewelle Taylor, Larke Nahme Huang, and Associates. *Children of Color: Psychological Interventions with Minority Youth*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989.
Written for mental health practitioners, *Children of Color* is one of the first sources to document the cultural differences among youth and to show how this should affect the delivery of mental health services. The authors believe that effective mental health intervention must be conducted with a knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of those they intend to serve. Furthermore, some unique cultural characteristics of the group being served should be incorporated into the counseling process.

Contributions by clinical and social psychologists address the cultural diversity of eight prominent ethnic groups in the U.S.: black Americans, Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, American Indians, Mexican Americans, mainland Puerto Ricans, Southeast Asians, and biracial groups. The text presents information on each group's demographics, epidemiology, history of entry/immigration into the U.S., family interaction, value systems, and methods for effective mental health intervention.

Kochman, Thomas. *Black and White: Styles in Conflict*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
A professor of communications and theater at the University of Illinois/Circle Campus, Kochman explains how communication problems between blacks and whites are rooted in their basic cultural differences. He documents several instances of black and white miscommunication and encourages examination and teaching of the cultural conventions in both communities to improve social interaction.

Among several sources of conflict he observed, Kochman examines the differences between the two ethnic groups in their nature of argumentation, self-expression, and sexual behavior. In conclusion, Kochman stresses the need to further examine points of contention between blacks and whites in jobs and schools in order to enhance the social and economic functioning of society as a whole.

CRIME PREVENTION/NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Curtis, Lynn A., ed. *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Vol. 494, *Policies to Prevent Crime: Neighborhood, Family, and Employment Strategies*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1987.
In this special issue of *Annals*, edited by Lynn A. Curtis (President of the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation), founders and advocates of youth development programs propose various approaches to violence prevention, including both program development and policy alternatives. Programs include: Argus Community, Inc. in the South Bronx; House of Umoja in Philadelphia; and Violent Juvenile Offender Research and Development Programs in the Bronx, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and San Diego.

National figures, including William Kolberg of the National Alliance of Business and Senator Edward Kennedy, offer their perspectives on employment opportunities for at-risk youth in the private sector, as well as their views on law enforcement policy.

Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation. ***Youth Investment and Community Reconstruction: Street Lessons on Drugs and Crime for the Nineties*****. Washington, D.C.: Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation, 1990.**
The Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation was created to activate neighborhood groups and at-risk youth to improve inner city conditions. This tenth anniversary report outlines the results of ten years of *neighborhood programs* implemented in inner city areas of Baltimore, Boston, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Cleveland, Miami, Minneapolis, Newark, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.. The Foundation *neighborhood programs*, pioneered by select community organizations, did reduce opportunities for crime and problems related to crime by involving the youth and the private sector of each community in their efforts.

Using statistical data and analyses, the report concludes that comprehensive programs, such as Head Start and Job Corps addressing the needs of the community and involving its members, do improve at-risk youth's achievement and self-esteem and are worth the investment.

National Crime Prevention Council. ***Changing Perspectives: Youth as Resources*****. Washington, D.C.: National Crime Prevention Council, 1990.**
The Lilly Endowment funded Youth as Resources (YAR), a program of the National Crime Prevention Council, to promote youth empowerment through participation in neighborhood improvement projects. The project ran for two and a half years in three diverse communities in Indiana: Evansville, Fort Wayne, and Indianapolis.

The report details the initial concept of YAR, evaluates the results of numerous neighborhood projects within each locality, and recommends ways to launch similar undertakings in other communities. Examples of projects undertaken include construction of a community playground, conducting AIDS and pregnancy prevention classes, and renovating neighborhood parks.

ECONOMICS AND EMPLOYMENT

Berlin, Gordon, and Andrew Sum. Project on Social Welfare and the American Future. ***Toward a More Perfect Union: Basic Skills, Poor Families, and Our Economic Future*****. New York: Ford Foundation, 1988.**
In response to critical U.S. economic and demographic changes since the 1970's, the Ford Foundation sponsored the Project on Social Welfare and the American Future to research and publish reports about new alternatives to current social welfare policy. In their report for the Project, Berlin and Sum focus on basic skills deficiencies by examining the effects on those individuals in society who cannot sufficiently read, write, or communicate. The lack of basic skills hinders youth's academic and work performance and is the leading cause of many social and economic problems in the U.S.: school failure, youth unemployment, teenage pregnancy, extreme poverty, and declining wages and productivity levels.

Berlin and Sum examine effective programs such as Job Corps, Head Start, national preschool education programs, and Chapter I programs. They assert that many intervention programs should operate together in well-defined "systems" to offer continuous basic skills training to youth of all ages.

Children's Defense Fund. ***Declining Earnings of Young Men: Their Relation to Poverty, Teen Pregnancy, and Family Formation*. Washington, D.C.: Children's Defense Fund, 1987.**
This report, one in a series of reports by CDF's Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Clearinghouse, analyzes how changes in the U.S. economy and social policy, rather than youth's lack of ability to achieve, have complicated the plight of families with teen parents. The lack of employment opportunities and the decline in real earnings of young men has reduced their ability to support a family, thus decreasing the likelihood of marriage. Consequently more single-parent families, are headed by young women who are at great risk of being poor.

Besides perpetuating poverty and isolation for all teen parents and their children, current economic and social trends have especially devastating effects on at-risk youth lacking adequate academic skills and credentials for success. Many disadvantaged teen parents leave school in search of gainful employment, and, because of their limited education and skills, find few opportunities to adequately support their needs.

CDF recommends more widely available instruction in basic and vocational skills, new incentives for academic achievement, extended summer job programs, better school-to-work transitions, and college preparation for poor and minority youth.

Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. National Center on Education and the Economy. *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!*. Rochester: National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990.
The National Center on Education and the Economy is a non-profit research organization created to develop new ideas and programs for improving international education and the world economy. The Center organized a Commission to propose specific ideas for increasing productivity in the U.S..

According to the report issued by the Center, U.S. businesses are hampered by a traditional labor system, relying on unskilled workers who are paid very little and have few responsibilities and benefits. In an increasingly high-technology international market, the U.S. must cultivate a highly-trained and well-paid workforce if it is to sustain or increase productivity.

The Commission calls for state and federal governments to fund new systems of education and training for workers of all ages, including alternative learning environments, school-to-work transition programs, and job apprenticeship programs.

Committee for Economic Development. Research and Policy Committee. *Children in Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged*. Washington, D.C.: Committee for Economic Development, 1987.
This 1987 report focuses on the importance of investing in the health, education, and social development of disadvantaged youth to ensure a qualified work force and a productive nation in the global economy of the future. Urging early and sustained intervention by partnerships of educators, policy makers, business leaders, families, and schools in the lives of at-risk youth, the report recommends a three-fold strategy of prevention through early education (childhood through adolescent development-); restructuring the foundation of education (school structure, staffing, management and financing); and retention and reentry (comprehensive programs in employment, health, and social services for students and dropouts).

Among the diverse programs discussed in the report are Children's Aid Society/Hunter College Pregnancy Prevention Program (New York, NY); the D.C. Management Institute for school management improvement; and the Boston Compact program for employment training for school dropouts.

Public/Private Ventures. *A Practitioner's Guide: Strategies, Programs, and Resources for Youth Employability Development*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1988.
Public/Private Ventures designs, manages, and evaluates programs to assist at-risk youth in developing their skills for productive employment. This report, written primarily for the service provider, offers insight into the employment problems of disadvantaged youth and proposes eight strategies to increase youth employability: basic skills enhancement, alternative schooling, work/study programs, job-readiness training, on-the-job training, occupational training, residential training, and youth service corps.

Some examples of programs discussed are Jobs for Youth, Inc. programs in New York, Boston, and Chicago; Summer Training and Education Programs at five national demonstration sites; and the New York City Volunteer Corps.

Public/Private Ventures. *The Practitioner's View: New Challenges in Serving High-Risk Youth*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1990.
Second in the series is the 1990 *Practitioner's View* that focuses on concerns of youth service providers from nine model programs whose obstacles resemble those faced by other U.S. program operators. Those nine programs are: Program Transformation, sponsored by the Manhattan, NY Valley Youth Program; Metrocenter YMCA Youth Division in Seattle, WA; Conservation Corps of San Francisco and East Bay, CA; Impact Services Job Preparation Project of Impact sponsored by Impact Services Corporation in Philadelphia; SER Jobs for Progress Occupational Skills Training in Miami; Training and Development Corporation in Bangor, ME; Industrial and Business Training Program of the Chicago Commons Association; and the Center for Employment Training in San Jose, CA.

Analysis of each organization identifies the needs of the population served and the services provided. The report offers the following recommendations to practitioners as a way to improve their services to disadvantaged youth: clarification of focus and objectives; increased public funding for more innovative services; well-trained and well-paid program staff; and a precise method by which to conduct program evaluations.

William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship. *The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America*. Washington, D.C.: Youth and America's Future: The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, 1988.
Youth and America's Future, a division of the Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, directed a two-year study on adolescent development by examining youth, their families, their communities, and related policy initiatives.

This initial report of the Commission states that economic and social changes in the U.S. have decreased gainful employment opportunities for non-college-bound youth (ages 16-24). The retail sector of our service economy, in which jobs are most accessible to youth, offers lower wages and fewer, if any, benefits than jobs in the earlier industry-based economy. High school graduates, overlooked as being young and unprepared if they do not attend college, are rarely hired for secure and well-paid work. These non-college youth should have more choices to participate in society. The Commission recommends developing more school-based and community-based supports, such as Head Start, Chapter I, and the Job Corps, for students and dropouts who are making the transition from school to work.

Included in the Commission's proposals to reform education are computer-assisted learning, alternative and magnet school expansion, community internships, and community service opportunities. States should maintain adequate training and support for dropouts (health education, social skills instruction), and for adults (financial aid and job training).

William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship. *The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America's Youth and Young Families*. Washington, D.C : Youth and America's Future: The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, 1988.
This final report of the Youth and America's Future Commission examines challenges and proposes solutions to problems facing youth and young families, two groups at critical stages of development. As stated in the Commission's initial report, *The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America* (see reference above), America's non-college-bound youth suffer from a lack of respect and support, as well as little opportunity for meaningful and gainful employment. Young families need more investment and support from schools, families, and the community.

The Commission report outlines four avenues for developing and extending services to youth and young families: family aid and adult guidance; youth involvement in the community; job training and access; and enactment of the legislation *Fair Chance: Youth Opportunities Demonstration Act* to provide funds for state-directed youth education and work training programs. The Commission also recommends the consolidation and expansion of current effective programs, as well as new programs for youth with disabilities and for adults.

Wilson, William Julius. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.
Wilson, a professor of sociology and public policy at the University of Chicago, is a former president of the American Sociological Association. Written as a result of the outcry and confusion over his work *The Declining Significance of Race*, *The Truly Disadvantaged* examines the socioeconomic factors destroying the social fabric of today's inner cities. Wilson attributes current inner-city problems to recent shifts in the American economy. Since WWII the economy has been moving from a manufacture-based to a service-based system. This has resulted in widespread elimination of high paying manufacturing-based positions with a rise in low paying service jobs.

In addition, Middle class blacks have moved out of the inner city, leaving behind a concentration of the most disadvantaged segment of the black population. This microcosm of society, according to Wilson, has developed a set of social norms incompatible with the larger society. Joblessness, teen pregnancy, and academic failure are rampant among inner city youth and are directly related to the social and economic breakdown of inner city communities. Wilson suggests that policy makers focus on programs in job training and transitional employment benefits to transform the urban ghetto into a productive unit for the future labor market.

EDUCATION

American Council on Education. Office of Minorities in Higher Education. *Ninth Annual Status Report on Minorities in Higher Education*. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1991.
This report examines the gains and setbacks of minority youth in the areas of high school completion, college admission and participation, and degree fulfillment. The text includes racial and ethnic specific data on higher education for African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans.

One chapter details demographic and educational trends in the Hispanic community. Twenty-five data tables include statistics on high school completion, college enrollment, and degree attainment, and all are broken down by race, gender, and age.

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents. *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1989.
The Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents was established by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development to report on young adolescent education and development. This report examines how middle schools, health institutions, and community groups prepare young adolescents to become healthy and intellectually reflective individuals, who are well-prepared for their roles in labor market and society.

To create an effective educational experience for all young adolescents, especially at-risk youth, the Task Force recommends numerous means for improving education and development in middle schools, including the creation of smaller, more cooperative teaching arrangements with close ties to families and organizations in their communities. The formative years of early adolescence are decisive in determining the success or failure of youth, and the Task Force favors partnerships among all sectors of society to oversee improvements in middle schools and organizations serving young adolescents.

Committee for Economic Development. Research and Policy Committee. *Investing in our Children: Business and the Public Schools*. Washington, D.C.: Committee for Economic Development, 1985.
The Research and Economic Policy Committee of the Committee for Economic Development creates and disseminates policy agendas on issues that affect business practices. In the past few years, three major reports have focussed on education and children's issues. (See entry on Children in Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged, page 12.)

This 1985 report examines four avenues to improve the quality of education and revive the nation's public school system. These include more skills training for successful employability; greater national investment in education; improvement of teaching and school management; and collaborations between schools and businesses.

For successful employability of its students, a school should offer basic preparation in literacy, mathematics, problem-solving, and social behaviors of teamwork, acceptance of responsibility, and respect for others. The Committee supports investment in education research by the Department of Education and specific programming such as Job Corps. It believes state and local governments should take more responsibility for funding school reform in their jurisdictions where changes are most effective.

The Committee calls for reform in public school management by providing more teacher education, increasing salaries and career incentives for teachers, as well as by enriching the role of the school principal through interaction with the business community. Businesses should participate in education reform by sharing managerial expertise and advising school leaders on skills and curriculum development.

De La Rosa, Denise, and Carlyle E. Maw. *Hispanic Education: A Statistical Portrait*. Washington, D.C.: National Council of La Raza, 1990.
The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) creates and supports policy recommendations, provides technical assistance to organizations, and informs the public of the status, needs, and concerns of the

Hispanic population. To reverse the educational crisis currently facing Hispanics, NCLR disseminates specific information to organizations, leaders, and policy makers.

The report includes statistics on changing Hispanic demographics, the lack of bilingual education services, the high Hispanic grade-repetition and dropout rates, the underrepresentation of Hispanics in the teaching force, and the extremely high rate of Hispanic illiteracy.

Hahn, Andrew, Jacqueline Danzberger, and Bernard Lefkowitz. *Dropouts in America: Enough is Known for Action, A Report for Policymakers and Grantmakers*. Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Educational Leadership, 1987.
The Institute for Educational Leadership develops national, state, and local programs to improve the public education system. In *Dropouts in America*, statistics and information from interviews with school officials, students, and dropouts illustrate what is already known about academic failure and its prevention. Poor academic performance, language difficulty, pregnancy, welfare dependency, and undiagnosed learning disabilities are among the risk factors that prompt youth to terminate their studies.

The report maintains that dropout prevention programs should start in the elementary years of schooling in order to identify and assist those youth who may be at risk of leaving school in the future. Aid to older dropouts should come from all sectors of the community and should be comprehensive, providing alternative education, remediation skills, job training, employment, and social services. According to the report, programs should strive to reinforce in young people the importance and necessity of completing school.

Hill, Paul T., Gail E. Foster, and Tamar Gendler. *High Schools with Character*. Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1990.
Supported by a grant from the RAND Corporation, the authors of *High Schools with Character* have examined three types of school organizations in 13 inner-city high schools of New York City and Washington, D.C.: special-purpose public schools (magnet schools), parochial schools, and "zoned" comprehensive public schools. The report describes the visible successes of special-purpose public and parochial schools in teaching and motivating their students.

The authors recommend that the basic features found in special-purpose public and parochial schools, including self-governance, clarity of educational focus, and personalized attention to students, be introduced into all zoned public schools. These features would give each institution more direct control to respond to the particular needs of their student population.

Lipsitz, Joan. *Successful Schools for Young Adolescents*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1984.
Lipsitz, then Director of the Center for Early Adolescence at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, presents her case studies of four junior high schools successfully responding to the special developmental needs of 10- to 14-year-olds. These model schools include Western Middle School in Alamance County, North Carolina, Dorothy L. Fisher Magnet School in Detroit, Michigan, Samuel V. Noe Middle School in Louisville, Kentucky, and Shoreham-Waking River Middle School in Shoreham, New York.

For the first time, Lipsitz offers guidelines to determine how public middle schools can promote positive youth development. Her guidelines include: competence and achievement; self-exploration and definition; social interaction with peers and adults; physical activity; and meaningful participation in school and community.

Noe Middle School, for instance, has a large and diverse student body from surrounding low-income communities, including youth who are disabled, academically gifted, and some who have posed discipline problems for officials in other schools. Both Noe's certified and special education instructors lead seven interdisciplinary teams, each with 150 students. The administration, known as the Supportive Service Team, dictates times for each team to plan, eat lunch, and meet for unified arts time. For the rest of the day, each team plans its own scheduling of skills, departmentalization, interdisciplinary units, intramurals, teacher-based guidance, and school/team rules.

This decentralized structure permits teachers to be attentive to the diverse needs of their students and it maintains students interested by enabling them to choose their study topics. The teams system at Noe sets the stage for flexibility and individual attention to students which has proven necessary for success in teaching at-risk youth.

Quality Education for Minorities Project. Action Council on Minority Education. *Education that Works: An Action Plan for the Education of Minorities*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1990.
The plan proposed by the Action Council of the QEM Project, a national network to improve the quality of education for minorities through legislation and community alliances of schools and businesses, offers insights into the educational needs and concerns of five minority groups in the U.S.: Alaska Natives, American Indians, black Americans, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans. The Action Council defines six goals, along with strategies for their implementation, and proposes that they be adopted to improve the academic achievement of minority Americans.

These goals ensure that minority students begin and finish school prepared and able to learn; that higher education enrollment by minority students will increase, especially in math and science; that the number of minority teachers will expand; that the school-to-work transition will improve so that minority students will be better trained to enter and advance in the labor force; and that extra-curricular and out-of-school educational activities will be expanded to serve more minority youth and adults.

Recommendations addressing all age groups are included in the report. For example, to guarantee that minority students start school prepared to learn, the Action Council recommends extending Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) coverage to all eligible participants by 1995. Aid to minority youth in the high school years should include implementation of a core academic curriculum with bilingual and/or multicultural counselors to prepare them for college and the workplace.

The Plan examines specific concerns of each ethnic group in terms of population, income, racial issues, and education, as well as myths of educating minority youth. Obstacles to quality education for these students include low expectations, inadequate financing, too few minority teachers in schools, poverty, unemployment, undereducated families, and negative peer pressures outside the school setting.

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES

Dash, Leon. ***When Children Want Children: An Inside Look at the Crisis of Teenage Parenthood.*** **New York: William Morrow, 1989.**
On assignment for 18 months with the *Washington Post* in the Washington Highlands neighborhood of Washington, D.C., Dash studied economic conditions, family interaction, and community surroundings to understand how they affect teenage pregnancy. Dash's transcripts of interviews and his experiences with teen mothers and their families reveal the needs young girls hope to satisfy by having a child. For these teenage mothers and their boyfriends, undereducated and reared in poor and strained family structures, the consummation of pregnancy affirms adulthood and presents a chance for a loving parent-child relationship rarely seen in their own families. These young girls, thus, become pregnant by choice but often end up with no means to support their children or themselves.

Dash's narrative portrays recurring crises of abandonment, substance abuse, violence, job instability, and welfare-dependency for these children with children who lack the education, experience, and skill to overcome inevitable hardship.

Kornblum, William, and Terry Williams. ***Growing Up Poor.*** **Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1985.**
Kornblum, a specialist in urban studies, is a professor of sociology at the City University of New York. Williams, then a senior research associate in sociology, has specialized in drug abuse and behavioral research. In *Growing Up Poor*, Williams and Kornblum present an ethnographic study of youth growing up in poverty in four diverse neighborhoods in New York City; Louisville, Kentucky; Meridian, Mississippi; and Cleveland, Ohio.

To document the realities of growing up poor, the authors hired teenagers in each community to write essays on their daily lives in their communities. Excerpts from these essays are woven throughout the text, describing their lives in poverty in terms of peer relationships, sexuality, employment, temptations for street crime, and the availability of adult mentors. Kornblum and Williams explore the effects of race, ethnicity, and gangs on youth's entry into the labor market.

Some disadvantaged youth manage to succeed in the job market, conclude Williams and Kornblum, but legitimate job opportunities are limited. Poor youth need increased assistance so that more may succeed in the social and economic mainstream. The authors suggest that efforts such as literacy training and federally-funded employment programs could help reduce poverty for these young people.

Sullivan, Mercer L. ***"Getting Paid:" Youth Crime and Work in the Inner City.*** **Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.**
Sullivan, currently at the Community Development Research Center of the New School for Social Research in New York City, is an ethnographer who studied patterns of criminal involvement among inner city youths (from their early teens to early twenties) in three Brooklyn communities, one black, one white, and one Hispanic, during the 1980's.

In *"Getting Paid"*, Sullivan develops a new theory of youth criminal activity that incorporates the social and economic factors of the different communities to explain youth involvement in crime. Traditional theories blaming the individual for becoming involved in crime are short-sighted. Sullivan posits that economic and social conditions of poor communities help create opportunities and incentives for criminal behavior. He examines education, legitimate employment, and the communities' level of tolerance for crime to understand why youth become involved in crime, what types of crime they commit, and for how long.

Sullivan concludes that differences in the social and economic structure of a particular community, rather than individual or group conduct, account for varying patterns in criminal activity. A majority of young teenage males are likely to experiment with fighting, petty theft, and vandalism. However, as they come of age and legitimate employment opportunities are restricted in their community, minority youth may continue in criminal activity and commit more serious offenses. In the white community, well-paying jobs are more available and, consequently, criminal activities become less desirable for them as they develop.

Taylor, Carl S. *Dangerous Society*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1990.
Taylor studied 50 youth involved in youth gangs in Detroit between 1980 and 1986. In *Dangerous Society*, he focuses on the two types of gangs prevalent in Detroit: the corporate gang, in which a strict hierarchy and meritocracy prevails; and scavenger gangs, that are more loosely organized and less structured. Taylor examines the gang subcultures as they relate to education, drug abuse, criminal behavior, and peer relationships. He concludes that youth in Detroit are driven to gangs for money, adventure, and a sense of belonging to a peer group.

Williams, Terry. *The Cocaine Kids: The Inside Story of a Teenage Drug Ring*. New York: Addison-Wesley, 1989.
This narrative profiles the lives of eight drug dealers in New York City whom the author befriended and studied from 1982 to 1986. The book begins with a description of the ethnographic methods used. Williams discusses cocaine, its chemistry and history, and then chronicles aspects of life in a New York City drug ring.

The mostly black and Hispanic youth who succumb to the drug culture, concludes Williams, are seeking success and acceptance by their families, friends, and society. In order to develop alternatives for these young men, researchers must identify and understand youth's motivations and limitations in their personal lives.

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